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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

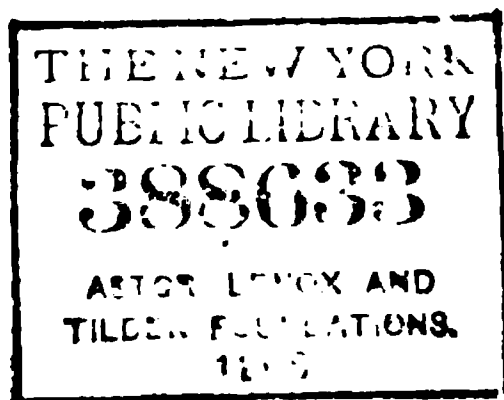
VOLUME X.

MAY-AUGUST, 1892

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE

NEW YORK
THE CURRENT LITERATURE PUBLISHING CO.
52 AND 54 LAFAYETTE PLACE



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THE PUERTO DE MEDINA

Tale of Love and Adventure

By MAURICE KINGSLEY

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By OPIE READ

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(Famous Stories Series)

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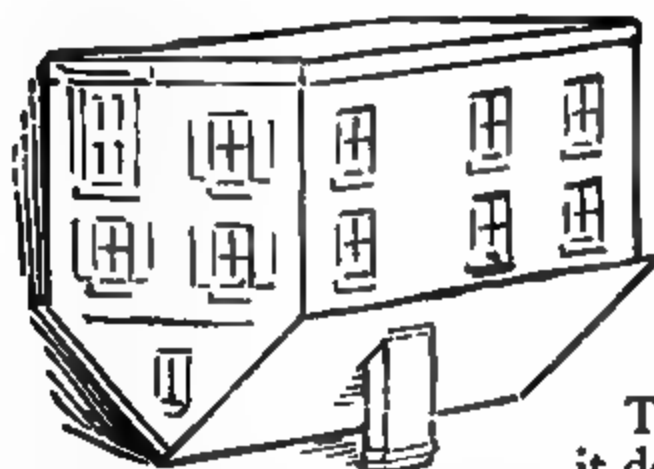
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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol. X. No. 1. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* MAY, 1892

ARTIST WAINWRIGHT

BY SIDNEY LUSKA

Being the amusing experiences of an American artist at the capital of a diminutive German principality. The unconventional heroine is own cousin to Gerolstein's immortal Grande Duchesse. Copyright, 1891, by the Authors' Alliance.

The cause of the uproar proved to be simple enough.

Emerging into the Bischofsplatz, I found a great crowd gathered before the Marmorhof, shouting "Death to Conrad!" and "Where is Mathilde?" with all the force of its collective lungs. The Marmorhof was the residence of Prince Conrad, brother to the reigning grand duke, Otto—reigning indeed, but now very old and ill, and like to die. The legitimate successor to the throne would have been Otto's granddaughter, Mathilde, the only surviving child of his eldest son, Franz-Victor, who had been dead these ten years. But the grand duke's brother, Conrad, was covetous of her rights; covetous, and, as her friends alleged, unscrupulous. For a long while, it was said Mathilde had been in constant terror of her life. Conrad was unscrupulous; and if she were but out of the way, Conrad would come to reign! Rumor, indeed, whispered that he had made three actual attempts to compass her death—two by poison and one by the dagger; each, thanks to some miracle, unsuccessful. But, a fortnight ago, upon the first outbreak of fatal symptoms in poor old Otto, Mathilde had mysteriously disappeared. Her whereabouts unknown, all the world was in a great commotion. "She has fled, and is in hiding, to escape the designs of her wicked uncle," surmised some people. "No," retorted others,

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"but he, the wicked uncle himself, has kidnapped her, sequestered her, perhaps, made away with her; who can tell?"

As an inquiring stranger, the situation interested me; and, from the top of a convenient door-step, I gazed upon this deep-voiced Teutonic mob with a good deal of curiosity. It must have numbered upward of a thousand individuals, compact in its centre and near the palace, but scattering toward its edges. I realized for the first time in my life what a perfect metaphor that is—a sea of faces. No other imaginable phrase could so exactly have hit off the scene before me; a sea of faces, a surging, troubled sea. Young men's faces, for the most part; many of them quite beardless.

"Students from the university," I guessed.

My own station was at the very outskirts of the assemblage, and sharing my friendly door-step with me were a couple of sharp-faced priests, two or three prettyish young girls—bare-headed, presumably run out from some of the neighboring shops—and a young man with a pointed black beard, rather long black hair, and a broad-brimmed, soft felt hat, who looked as if he might be a member of that guild to which I myself belonged, the ancient and honorable company of artists. To him I addressed a question—

"Students, I suppose?"

"Yes, their leaders are students. The students and the artisans of the town are of the princess' party. The army, the clergy, and the country folk are for the prince."

He had discerned from my accent that I was a foreigner; hence, doubtless, the fulness of his answer.

"It seems to be a harmless mob enough," I suggested. "They make a lot of noise, to be sure; but that breaks no bones."

"There's just the point," said he. "The princess' friends fight only with their throats. If she had some bone breakers among them, this complication could never have arisen."

But meanwhile the multitude continued to shout. "Give us our princess!" "Where is the Hereditary Grand Duchess?" "Where is Mathilde?" "Down with Conrad!" "Shame on Conrad!" "Hang Conrad!" "Death to Conrad!"

And such like; so that for Conrad, on the whole, it must have been a bad quarter of an hour. Presently, however, came the sound of a bugle winding in the distance. The sound drew nearer and nearer. Pretty soon the bugler in

person appeared, gorgeous in uniform, mounted upon a beautiful white horse, advancing slowly up the Bischofsplatz, toward the crowd, trumpeting with all his might.

"What is the meaning of that?" I asked.

"That is a signal to disperse," answered my companion. "He looks like a major-general, doesn't he? But he's only a trumpet-sergeant, and he's followed at a hundred yards by a battalion of infantry. His trumpet blast is by way of warning. Disperse, it says, and all will be forgiven. Tarry, and the soldiery will arrive and make things hot for you."

"His warning does not seem to pass unheeded," I remarked.

"Oh, they're a chicken-hearted lot, these friends of the princess," he assented contemptuously.

Already the mob had begun to melt. Of mob, properly speaking, in a few minutes, nothing was left, only a few stragglers in knots here and there, among them my acquaintance and myself.

"We, too, had better be off," he said.

"And prove ourselves also chicken-hearted?" queried I.

"Oh, discretion is the better part of valor," he returned.

"But I should immensely like to stop and see the advent of the military," I submitted.

"Ha! Like or not, I'm afraid you'll have to now," he cried. "Here they come."

With a murderous tramp, tramp, the soldiers were pouring into the Bischofsplatz from the side streets leading to it.

"We must take to our heels," said my young man.

"We were merely on-lookers," said I.

"Conscious innocence," laughed he. "Nevertheless, we had better run for it." And with our fellow-loiterers we began most ignominiously to run away. But before we had run far we were stopped by the voice of an officer.

"Halt! Halt! Halt, or we fire!"

As one man we halted.

The officer rode up to us, vouchsafed not a word either in question or explanation, but formed us in ranks of four abreast, and surrounded us with his men. Then he gave the command to march. We were perhaps two dozen captives all told, and a good quarter of our number were women.

"What are we in for now?" I wondered aloud.

"God knows," replied my friend. "A night in the castle of St. Michael, at any rate." And he shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, that will be romantic," said I, feeling like one launched upon a life of adventure.

He was quite right. We were marched across the town, through its narrow thoroughfares, over its sharp paving stones, and into the court-yard of the castle of St. Michael. By the time we got there and the heavy oaken gates were shut behind us, it was nearly dark.

"Here you pass the night," announced our officer. "In the morning—humph! we will see."

"Do you mean to say they are going to afford us no better accommodation than this?" I demanded, apostrophizing the powers of the air, rather than any definite personality.

But the dark young man took it upon him to reply. "So it seems," said he. "Fortunately, however, the night is warm, the skies are clear, and to gaze upon the stars is reputed to be most elevating for the spirit."

We, the prisoners, gathered together in the middle of the court-yard, all of us, and held a sort of impromptu indignation meeting. The women were especially eloquent in their complaints. Two of these I recognized as having been among my neighbors of the door-step a half-hour since, and we exchanged glances. The other four were oldish women, who wore caps and aprons, and looked like domestic servants.

"Cooks," whispered my comrade. "Some good burghers will be kept waiting for their suppers. Oh, what a lark!"

Our convention finally broke up with an informal resolution to the effect that, though we had been most shabbily treated, there was nothing to be done.

"We must grin and bear it. But let us make ourselves as comfortable as we may, and seek distraction in an interchange of ideas," proposed my mate. He seated himself upon a barrel that lay lengthwise against the castle wall, and motioned to me to place myself beside him.

"You are English?" he inquired, in an abrupt German way.

"No, I am American."

"Ah, it is the same thing. Have you been long in X——?"

"Three days."

"For Heaven's sake, what have you found to keep you here three days?"

"I am a painter, and the town is paintable."

"Still life! *Nature morte!*" he cried. "It is the dullest little town in Christendom. But I am glad you are a painter. I am a musician, a fiddler."

"I suspected we were of the same general clan," said I.

"Did you, though? How funny! But I also seemed to scent a kindred soul."

"Here is my card. If we're not beheaded in the morning, I hope we may see more of each other," I went on.

He took my card, and, by the light of a match he struck for the occasion, read aloud from it, "Mr. Arthur Wainwright," pronouncing the English name without difficulty. "I have no card, but my name is Sebastian Roch."

"You speak English?" was my inference.

"Oh, yes, I speak a kind of English," he confessed, using the tongue in question. He had scarcely a trace of accent.

"You speak it uncommonly well," I declared.

"Oh, I learned it as a child, and then I have relatives in England," he explained.

"Do you suppose there would be any objection to our smoking?" I asked.

"Oh, no, let us smoke, by all means."

I offered him my cigarette case. When we had our cigarettes afire, we resumed our talk.

"Tell me; what in your opinion is the truth about Mathilde?" I began. "Is she voluntarily hiding? Or is her uncle at the bottom of it?"

"Ah, that is too hard a riddle," he protested. "I know nothing about it, and I have scarcely an opinion. But I may say very frankly that I am not one of her partisans. She has no worse enemy than I."

"What! really? I'm surprised at that. I thought all the youth of X—— were devoted to her."

"She's a harmless enough little person in her way, perhaps, and I have nothing positive to charge against her. Only I don't think she's made of the proper stuff for a reigning monarch. She is too giddy, too light-headed, a sort of mad-cap hoyden. She thinks too little of her dignity. Court ceremonial is infinitely tiresome to her; and the slow dead life of X—— she fairly hates. 'Harmless, necessary X——,' she has been known to call it. She was never born to be the motionless figure-head of this tiny ship of state; and with such a crew! Oh, you should see the ministers and

courtiers—dry bones and parchment, puffed up with tedious German ‘eddigette!’ She is too easily bored, too fond of amusement. She was born to be a Bohemian, an artist, like you or me. I pity her, poor thing, I pity every one whose destiny it is to inhabit this dreary principality—but I can’t approve of her. She, too, by the bye, is a fiddler. She is said to play the violin very well. My own thought is—beware of fiddling monarchs.”

“You hint a Nero,” said I.

“Yes. I’ve no doubt she’d fiddle over the ashes of X—with the best will in the world. Say, a Nero crossed with a Haroun-al-Raschid. I fear her reign would be marred by many a queer midnight escapade, like that of the merry caliph, only without his intermixture of wrong-righting. She’d seek her own amusement solely; though to seek that in X—— pshaw! you might as well seek for blood in a stone. Oh, she’d make no end of mischief. The devil hath no agent like a woman bored.”

“That’s rather true,” I agreed, laughing; “and Conrad? What of him?”

“Oh, Conrad’s a beast, a squint-eyed, calculating beast, there’s no doubt of that. But a beast might make a good enough grand duke; however, to tell you my own secret feeling, I don’t believe he’ll have the chance to prove it. Mathilde, for all her *ennui*, is described as most tenacious of her rights, and as a shrewd little body too, down at bottom. That is inconsistent, but there’s the woman of it. Oh, she’s inconsequential to a degree! I can’t help suspecting that unless her uncle has really killed and buried her she will contrive by hook or crook to come to the throne. For my part, I’m sorry. I should prefer to be ruled by Conrad. But I would not bet my money on him, all the same. Have you ever seen him? He has the funniest, ugliest squint in Europe.”

That night was very long, though we accomplished a lot of talking; very cold, it seemed, too, though we were in mid-summer. I dozed a little, with the stone wall of the castle for my pillow. At daybreak our guard was changed. At six o’clock we were visited by a dapper little subaltern, a lieutenant, who looked us over, asked our names and sundry other personal questions, scratched his chin for a moment reflectively, and finally, with an air of inspiration, bade us

begone. The gates were thrown open and we issued from our prison, free! "It's been almost a sensation," said Sebastian Roch. "Well, so one can experience almost a sensation, even in X——! Live and learn."

"You are not a patriot," said I.

"My dear sir, I am patriotism personified. I am identified with my country heart and soul. Only I find it dull. If that be treason, make the most of it! I could not love thee dear so well, loved I not dulness less. It is not every night that I am arrested and sit on a barrel smoking cigarettes with an enlightened foreigner. The English are not generally accounted a lively race, but by comparison with the inhabitants of X—— they shine like diamonds."

"I dare say so," I acquiesced. "But I'm not English, I'm American."

"So I perceived from your accent," answered he, impertinently. "But, as I told you once before, it amounts to the same thing. You wear your rue with a difference, that is all."

"Speaking of sensations," said I, "I shall die if I don't drink a cup of coffee."

"You'll find no public-house awake at this hour," said Sebastian.

"Then I'll wake one up," vowed I.

"What! and provoke a violation of the law? By law they're not allowed to be open between midnight and seven o'clock."

"Oh, laws be hanged. I must have a cup of coffee."

"Really, you are delightful," asserted Sebastian, putting his arm through mine.

Presently we came to a beer hall, at whose door I began vehemently to bang. My friend stood by, shaking with laughter which seemed to me disproportionate to the humor of the event.

"You are easily amused," said I.

"Oh, no, far from it; but this is such a lark, you know," said he.

By and by we were seated opposite each other at a table, sipping hot coffee, served to us by a sleepy *kellner* in a soiled white apron. As I looked at Sebastian Roch, I observed a startling phenomenon. The apex of his right whisker had become detached from the skin, and was standing out half an inch from his cheek. The sight sent a shiver down my

spine. It was certainly most unnatural and eerie. His eyes were bright and honest; his voice soft and refined; he spoke English like a man and a brother; and his character, so far as I had got at it through his talk, seemed whimsical and open; but his beard, his dashing, black, pointed beard, which I'm not sure I hadn't been envying him a little, was peculiar; and instinctively I felt for my watch. It was safe in its place, and so was my purse. Therefore at the door of the *bierhaus*, in due time, we bade each other a friendly good-by, he promising to look me up one of these days at my hotel.

"I have enjoyed your society more than you can think," he said. "Some of these days I'll drop in and see you *à l'improviste*."

That afternoon I again found myself in the Bischofsplatz. At X—— one is constantly finding one's self in the Bischofsplatz. Nearly all the streets of the little capital give upon it; and the cathedral is there, and the bishop's palace, and the Marmorhof, and the principal café; and it is there that the military band plays of a pleasant evening. At one of the open-air tables of the café I was seated, when a man passed me, clad in the brown garb of a Franciscan monk. He had a pointed black beard, this monk, and a pair of flashing dark eyes, and though he quickly drew his head into his cowl I had no difficulty whatever in identifying him with my prison mate, Sebastian Roch.

"Dear me! he has become a monk. It must have been a singularly swift conversion," thought I, looking after him with some wonder.

He marched straight across the Bischofsplatz, and into the court-yard of the Marmorhof, where he was lost to my view.

"The beggar! He is one of Conrad's spies," I concluded; and I searched my memory to recall if I had said anything of a nature that might compromise me in the course of our conversation.

A few hours later I sat down to my dinner in the best parlor of the Hotel de Rome. Mine host rejoiced in the name of Hildebrandt Strumpf, and on the occasion in question no less a person than himself was serving me. Scarcely, however, had he lifted the cover from my tureen of nudel soup, when suddenly, and without a breath of apology, he dropped the cover upon the table-cloth, and dashed in mad haste from

the room. Wondering somewhat at this precipitate conduct, I was about to fill my plate, when I was arrested in the act by a great noise of hurrying feet upon the pavements without. People were running and calling to each other, and altogether there was so much tumult that I said to myself, "Ah, another mob!" Then I too left the parlor, and hastened to the street door of the inn.

There I discovered honest Strumpf and honest Mrs. Strumpf, supported by the entire *personnel* of their establishment, from the boots to the billiard-marker, all agape with astonishment, as three loquacious citizens poured news into their ears.

"Otto is dead," said the first citizen. "He died at sixteen minutes past six, more than an hour ago."

"But that is nothing," cried the second citizen. "The great news is this. Listen to me."

"No, to me," interposed the third, "I have it directly from one of the sentinels at the palace. The pretender, Conrad, has been knifed like a pig; and jolly well he deserved it too. It was between four and five o'clock this afternoon. A monk, a young monk, a Franciscan, presented himself at the Marmorhof, and demanded an audience with the prince. The palace guard—and it is straight from one of them that I have the story—of course refused him admittance; but he was determined, and so at last the prince's chamberlain gave him a hearing. The upshot was he wrote a word or two upon a slip of paper, sealed it up with wax, and begged that it might be delivered to his Highness forthwith, swearing that it contained information of the utmost importance to the prince's welfare. The chamberlain conveyed this paper to his Highness, who, directly he had read it, uttered a great oath, and ordered that the monk be ushered into his presence, and that they be left alone together. Alone, accordingly, they were left. More than an hour passed. At a little after six arrived the news of the death of the old duke. An officer entered the prince's chamber to report it to him. There, if you please, he found his Highness stretched out dead upon the floor, with a knife in his heart. The monk had vanished; they could find no trace of him, whatever. The paper he had sent in to the prince also had vanished; but, what the police regard as an important clew, he had left another paper, twisted around the handle of the dagger, whereon was scrawled in a disguised

hand—"In the country of the blind the one-eyed men may be kings; but Conrad only squinted!"

"The grand point of it all you have omitted," put in the second citizen. "It is this. Shut up in an inner apartment of the Marmorhof, they have found the Hereditary Grand Duchess Mathilde, alive and well! Conrad has been keeping her a prisoner there these two weeks."

The tidings thus delivered by these worthies proved to be substantially correct.

"The duke is dead! Long live the duchess!" cried the populace.

It was like a delightful old-fashioned blood-and-thunder opera, and I was almost behind the scenes. But, oh, that hypocritical young ribald monk, Sebastian Roch! What had become of him? Would he keep his promise to look me up? The police were said to be looking him up, but with, as yet, no positive results.

Of course upon the accession of the new ruler to the throne, all the shops of the town displayed her Highness' portraits for sale—photographs and chromo-lithographs—you paid your money and you took your choice. These represented her as a slight young woman, with a delicate, interesting face, a somewhat sarcastic mouth, great abundance of yellowish hair, and, in striking contrast to this *chevelure*, a pair of brilliant dark eyes. I could not for the life of me have explained it, but there was something in her face that annoyed me with a sense of familiarity, a sense of having seen it before, though I was sure I never had. In the course of a fortnight, however, I did see her—caught a flying glimpse of her as she drove through the Marktstrasse in her victoria, attended by all manner of pomp and circumstance. She lay back upon her cushions, looking pale and interesting, but sadly bored; and again I experienced that exasperating sensation of having seen her before—where? when? how?

One night I was awakened from my slumbers by a violent knocking at my door. "Who's there?" I demanded, not too amiably. "What's the matter?"

"Open! Open, in the name of the Grand Duchess!" commanded a deep bass voice.

"Good heavens! What can the row be now?" I wondered.

"Open, or we break in the door," cried the voice.

"You must really give me time to put something on," I protested, and hurriedly wrapped myself in some clothes.

Then I opened the door.

A magnificently uniformed young officer stepped quickly into the room, followed by three gendarmes with drawn sabres.

The officer inclined his head slightly toward me, and said, "Herr Veinricht, ich glaube?"

His was not the voice that I had heard through the door; it was a much softer voice, and higher in pitch. Somehow it did not seem altogether the voice of a stranger to me; and yet the face of a stranger his emphatically was. It was a very florid face, surmounted by a growth of short red hair, and decorated by a bristling red mustache. His eyes were overhung by bushy red eye-brows, and in the candle-light I could not make out their color.

"Yes, I am Herr Veinricht," I admitted, accepting this German version of my name.

"English?" he questioned shortly.

"No, not English. American, if you please."

"Macht nichts! I arrest you in the name of the Grand Duchess."

"Arrest me! Will you inform me upon what charge?"

"Upon the charge of consorting with dangerous characters, and being an enemy to the tranquillity of the State. You will please to dress as quickly as possible. A carriage awaits you below."

"Good Lord, they have somehow connected me with that infamous fiddler, Sebastian Roch," I groaned inwardly. And I began to put certain finishing touches to my toilet.

"No, no!" cried the officer. "You must put on your dress-suit. Are you so ignorant of etiquette as not to know that state prisoners are required to wear their dress-suits?"

"It seems a very absurd regulation," said I. "But I will put on my dress-suit!"

"We will await you outside the door; but let me warn you, should you attempt to escape through the window, you will be shot in a hundred places," said the officer, and retired with his minions.

I donned my dress-suit, and opened the door.

The officer looked me over somewhat critically, and at last remarked, "Yes, that will do, follow me."

The whole population of the hotel were in the corridors,

and crowded after us to the street. A closed carriage was waiting there, with four horses attached, ridden by postilions. "Will you be good enough to enter?" said the officer.

But my spirit rose in arms.

"I insist upon knowing what I am arrested for. I want to understand the definite charge against me."

"I am not a magistrate, sir. Will you kindly get in?"

"Oh, this is an outrage," I vowed, but entered the carriage.

The officer leaped in after me; the door was slammed to; the postilions yelled at their horses; off we drove, followed by the rhythmical clank, clank of the gendarmes on horseback.

"I should really like to get at the meaning of all this, you know," I informed my captor.

"I must caution you that whatever you say will be remembered, and, if incriminating, used against you," he replied.

"It is a breach of international comity," said I.

"Oh, we are the best of friends with England," said he.

"But I am an American," said I.

"Macht nichts!" said he.

"Macht nichts!" I echoed angrily. "You think so? I shall bring the case to the notice of the minister of the United States."

"What! and precipitate a war between two friendly nations? Unfeeling monster!"

"You laugh! But who laughs last laughs best, and I promise you the grand duchy of X—— shall be made to pay for this pleasantry with a vengeance."

"This is not the first time that you have been arrested while in these dominions," he said sternly. "And I must remind you that *Lèse-majesté* is a hanging matter."

"*Lèse-majesté!*" I repeated, half in scorn, half in terror.

"Ya wohl, mein Herr," he answered. "But after all I am but obeying orders," he added, with an inflection almost apologetic.

Where had I heard that curious soft voice before? A voice so soft that his German sounded almost like Italian.

Meanwhile we had driven straight across the town, past the walls, and into the country. The night air, through the open carriage window, was sweet with the odors of dew-laden grass, and vibrant with the humming of insects.

"You are perhaps conducting me to the frontier," I suggested, deriving some relief from the fancy.

"Oh, hardly so far as that, let us hope," he rejoined, with what struck me as a suppressed chuckle.

"Far!" I cried. "Can you use the word in speaking of a pocket handkerchief?"

"It is small, but it is picturesque, it is paintable," said he. "And, what is more, by every syllable you utter against it you weave a strand into your halter and drive a nail into your coffin."

The night was intensely dark, and I could see no farther into it than the few yards of roadway illuminated by our carriage lamps. We drove on in silence for perhaps a half-hour longer. Then at last the horses' hoofs resounded upon stone, and we drew up. My officer descended from the carriage; I followed him. We were standing under a massive archway, a sort of *porte-cochère*, lighted by a hanging lantern. Before a small door pierced in the stone wall fronting us a sentinel was posted, with his musket presented in salute.

The three mounted gendarmes sprang from their saddles.

"Farewell, Herr Veinricht," said my officer; "I have enjoyed our drive more than I can tell you. If we should never meet again in this world, let us hope we shall in another and better." Then, turning to his subordinates, "Conduct this gentleman to the tower chamber," he commanded.

The sentry stood aside. One of the gendarmes preceding me, the other two coming behind, I was conveyed up a narrow, winding, stone staircase, into a big octagonal-shaped room. The room was lighted by innumerable candles set in sconces round the walls. It was comfortably, even richly, furnished, and decorated with considerable taste. Books, pictures, were scattered about, and in one corner there stood a grand piano, open, with a violin and bow lying on it.

The gendarmes bowed themselves out, shutting the door behind them with an ominous clangor.

"If this is to be my dungeon cell," I thought, "I shall not be so uncomfortable after all. But how preposterous of them to force me to wear my dress-suit!"

I threw myself into an easy-chair, buried my face in my hands, and tried to reflect upon my situation.

Suddenly I was disturbed by the sound of a light cough behind me, a discreet little *ahem*.

I looked quickly up.

A lady had entered the apartment, and was standing in

the middle of it, smiling in contemplation of my despairing attitude.

"Good heavens," I thought, as her face grew clear to my startled sight. "The Grand Duchess herself!"

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Wainwright," her Highness began, in English but slightly Continental. "X—— is a dull little place—oh, believe me, the dullest of its size in Christendom—and they tell me you are an amusing man."

Now of course the reader has foreseen it from the outset; but upon me it came as a thunder-bolt, and in my emotion I forgot myself, and exclaimed aloud, "Sebastian Roch!" The face of the Grand Duchess had haunted me with a sense of familiarity; the voice of my red-headed officer in the carriage had seemed not strange to me; but now that I saw the face, and heard the voice, tinged by that slight foreign quality of English, at one and the same time, all was clear.

"Sebastian Roch!"

"You said?" the gracious lady queried, arching her eyes.

"Nothing, madame. I was about to thank your Highness for her kindness, but——"

"But your mind wandered, and you made some irrelevant military observation about a bastion rock. It is perhaps aphasia?"

"Yes, very probably," assented I.

"But you are a man of honor, are you not?"

"I hope so."

"The English generally are. You can keep a state secret, especially when you happen to have learned it by a sort of accident, can you not?"

"I am a very tomb for such things, madame."

"That is well. And, besides, you must consider that not all homicide is murder. Sometimes one is driven to kill in self-defence."

"I have not a doubt of that."

"I am only sorry it should all have happened before you saw his squint. It would have pleased your sense of humor. X—— is the dullest little principality," she went on, "oh, but dull, dull, dull! I am sometimes forced in despair to perpetrate little jokes. Yet you have actually stopped here five weeks. It must be as they say, that the English people take their pleasures sadly. You are a painter, I am told."

"Yes, your Highness; I make a shift at painting."

"And I at fiddling. But I lack a discriminating audience. I think you had better paint my portrait. I will fiddle to you to your heart's content. Between whiles we will talk. Sometimes, I may tell you, I smoke cigarettes; one must have some excitement. We will try to enliven things a little, to galvanize a little life into this corpse court. Do you think we shall succeed?"

"Oh, I should not despair of doing so."

"That is nice of you. I have a most ridiculous high chancellor; you might draw caricatures of him. And my first lady of the chamber has a preposterous lisp. I do hope I shall be amused."

As she spoke she extended the left hand toward me. I took it, and was about to give it a friendly shake.

"No, no, not that," said she. "Oh, I forgot; you are an American and a democrat, and the simplest a-b-c of court etiquette is Sanskrit to you. Must I tell you what to do?"

To cut a long story short, I thought my lines had fallen in extremely pleasant places; and so indeed they had—for a while. I passed a merry summer at the court of X——, alternating between the *Residenz* in the town and the *Schloss* beyond the walls. I made a good many preliminary studies for the princess' portrait while she played her violin, and between times, as she had promised, we talked, smoked cigarettes, and laughed at scandal. But when I began upon the final canvas, I, at least, had to become a little grave; I wanted to make a masterpiece of it. We had two or three sittings, during which I worked away in grim silence, and the Grand Duchess yawned.

Then, one night, I was again roused from the middle of my slumbers by a gray-bearded colonel of dragoons, conducted to a closed carriage, and driven abroad through the darkness. When our carriage came to a stand-still, we found ourselves in the Austrian village of Z——, across the X—— frontier. There my colonel bade me good-by. At the same time he handed me an envelope. I hastened to tear it open, and read these words in a pretty feminine hand,—

"You promised to amuse me. But it seems you take your droll British art too seriously. We have better portrait painters among our natives; and you will find models cheap and plentiful at Z——. Farewell!"

DEATH COMETH SOON OR LATE

BY LUKE SHARP

A grimly humorous and pathetic study of the inevitable. In the course of the story is shown how a man hastened his death for charity's sake. From the Detroit Free Press.

It was Alick Robbins who named him the Living Skeleton, and probably remorse for having thus given him a title so descriptively accurate caused Robbins to make friends with the Living Skeleton, a man who seemed to have no friends.

Robbins never forgot their first conversation. It happened in this way. It was the habit of the Living Skeleton to leave his hotel promptly every morning at ten o'clock, if the sun was shining, and to shuffle rather than to walk down the gravel street to the avenue of palms. There, picking out a seat on which the sun shone, the Living Skeleton would sit down and seem to wait patiently for some one who never came. He wore a shawl around his neck and a soft cloth cap on his skull. Every bone in his face stood out against the skin, for there seemed to be no flesh, and his clothes hung as loosely on him as they would have upon a skeleton. It required no second glance at the Living Skeleton to know that the remainder of his life was numbered by days or hours, and not by weeks or months. He didn't seem to have energy enough even to read, and so it was that Robbins sat down one day on the bench beside him and said sympathetically, "I hope you are feeling better to-day."

The Skeleton turned toward him and laughed a low, noiseless, and mirthless laugh for a moment, and then said, in a hollow, far-away voice that had no lungs behind it, "I am through with feeling either better or worse."

"Oh, I hope it is not as bad as that," said Robbins; "the climate is doing you good down here, is it not?"

Again the Skeleton laughed silently, and Robbins began to feel uneasy. The Skeleton's eyes were large and bright, and they fastened themselves upon Robbins in a way that increased that gentleman's uneasiness, and made him think that perhaps the Skeleton knew he had so named him.

"I have no more interest in climate," said the Skeleton. "I merely seem to live because I have been in the habit of

living for some years; I presume that is it, because my lungs are entirely gone. Why I can talk or why I can breathe is a mystery to me. You are perfectly certain you hear me?"

"Oh, I hear you quite distinctly," said Robbins.

"Well, if it wasn't that people tell me that they can hear me, I wouldn't believe that I am really speaking, because, you see, I have nothing to speak with. Isn't it Shakespeare who says something about—when the brains are out the man is dead? Well, I have seen some men who make me think Shakespeare was wrong in his diagnosis, but it is generally supposed that when the lungs are gone a man is dead. To tell the truth, I am dead, practically. You know the old American story about the man who walked around to save funeral expenses; well, it isn't quite that way with me, but I can appreciate how the man felt. Still, I take a keen interest in life, although you might not think so. You see, I haven't much time left; I am going to die at eight o'clock on the thirtieth of April—eight o'clock at night, not in the morning, just after *table d'hôte* is done with."

"You're going to *what*?" cried Robbins, in astonishment.

"I'm going to die that day. You see, I have got things to such a point that I can die any time I want to. I could die right here now if I wished. If you have any mortal interest in the matter I'll do it, and show you that what I say is true. I don't mind much, you know, although I had fixed on April the thirtieth as the limit. It wouldn't matter a bit for me to go off now if it would be of any interest to you."

"I beg you," said Robbins, very much alarmed, "not to try any experiments on my account. I am quite willing to believe anything you say about the matter—of course you ought to know."

"Yes, I do know," answered the Living Skeleton, sadly. "Of course, I have had my struggle with hope and fear, but that is all past now, as you may well understand. The reason that I have fixed the date for the thirtieth of April is this: You see I have only a certain amount of money—I do not know why I should make any secret of it—I have exactly two hundred and forty francs to-day, over and above the one hundred francs which I have set aside for another purpose. I am paying eight francs a day at the Golden Dragon; that you see will keep me just thirty days, and then I intend to die."

The Skeleton laughed again, without sound, and Robbins moved uneasily on the seat.

"I don't see," he said, finally, "what there is to laugh about in that condition of affairs."

"Don't you?" said the Skeleton. "Well, I don't suppose there is very much; but there is something else that I consider very laughable, and that I will tell you if you will keep it a secret. You see, the old Golden Dragon himself—I always call our innkeeper the Golden Dragon, just as you call me the Living Skeleton."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Robbins, stammering. "I——"

"Oh, it doesn't matter at all. You are perfectly right, and I think it a very apt term. Well, the Golden Dragon makes a great deal of his money by robbing the dead. You didn't know that, did you? You thought it was the living who supported him, and goodness knows he robs them when he has a chance. Well, you are very much mistaken. When a man dies in the Golden Dragon, he, or his friends rather, have to pay very sweetly for it. The Dragon charges them for refurnishing the room. Every stick of furniture is charged for, all the wall paper and so on. I suppose it is right to charge something, but the Dragon is not content with what is right. He knows he has lost a customer, and so he makes all he can out of him. The furniture, so paid for, is not replaced, and the walls are not papered again, but the Dragon doesn't abate a penny of his bill on that account.

"Now, I have inquired of the furnishing man on the street back of the hotel, and he has written on his card just the cost of mattress, sheets, pillows, and all that sort of thing, and the amount comes up to about fifty francs. I have put in an envelope a fifty-franc note, and with it the card of the furniture man. I have written also in the letter, telling the old Dragon just what the things will cost that he needs, and have referred him to the card of the furniture man who has given me the figures. This envelope I have addressed to the Dragon, and he will find it when I am dead. This is the joke that old man Death and myself have put up on the Dragon, and my only regret is that I shall not be able to enjoy a look at the Dragon's countenance as he reads my last letter to him.

"Another sum of money I have put away, in good hands where he won't have a chance to get it, for my funeral expenses, and then you see I am through with the world. I have nobody to leave that I need worry about, or who would either take care of me or feel sorry for me if I needed care or sympathy, which I do not. So that is why I laugh, and that is why I come down and sit on this bench, in the sunshine, and enjoy the posthumous joke."

Robbins did not appear to be able to see the humor of the situation quite so strongly as the Living Skeleton did. At different times, after that, when they met, he had offered the Skeleton more money if he wanted it, so that he might prolong his life a little, but the Skeleton always refused.

A sort of friendship sprang up between Robbins and the Living Skeleton—at least, as much of a friendship as can exist between the living and the dead, for Robbins was a muscular young fellow who did not need to live at the Riviera on account of his health, but merely because he detested an English winter. Besides this, it may be added, although it is really nobody's business, that a nice girl and her parents lived in this particular part of the south of France.

One day Robbins took a little excursion in a carriage to Toulon. He had invited the nice girl to go with him, but on that particular day she could not go. There was some big charity function on hand, and one necessary part of the affair was the wheedling of money out of the people's pockets, and the nice girl had undertaken to do part of the wheedling. She was very good at it, and she rather prided herself upon it, but then she was a very nice girl, pretty as well, and so people found it very difficult to refuse her. On the evening of the day there was to be a ball at the principal hotel in the place, also in connection with this very desirable charity. Robbins had reluctantly gone to Toulon alone, but you may depend upon it he was back in time for the ball.

"Well," he said to the nice girl when he met her, "what luck collecting to-day?"

"Oh, the greatest luck," she replied enthusiastically, "and who do you think I got the most money from?"

"I am sure I haven't the slightest idea—that old English duke, he certainly has money enough."

"No, not from him at all; the very last person you would expect it from—your friend the Living Skeleton."

"What!" cried Robbins, in alarm.

"Oh, I found him on the bench where he usually sits, in the avenue of palms. I told him all about the charity, and how useful it was, and how necessary, and how we all ought to give as much as we could toward it, and he smiled and smiled at me in that curious way of his. 'Yes,' he said, in a whisper, 'I believe the charity should be supported by every one; I will give you eighty francs.' Now, wasn't that very generous of him? Eighty francs, that was ten times what the duke gave, and as he handed me the money he looked up at me and said in that awful whisper of his—'Count that over carefully when you get home and see if you can find out what else I have given you. There is more than eighty francs there.' Then, after I got home, I——"

But here the nice girl paused, when she looked at the face of Robbins, to whom she was talking. That face was ghastly pale, and his eyes were staring at her but not seeing her. "Eighty francs," he was whispering to himself, and he seemed to be making a mental calculation in subtraction. Then noticing the nice girl's amazed look at him, he said,

"Did you take the money?"

"Of course I took it," she said. "Why shouldn't I?"

"Great Heavens!" gasped Robbins, and then he turned and fled, leaving the nice girl transfixed with astonishment and staring after him with a frown on her pretty brow.

"What does he mean by such conduct?" she asked herself. But Robbins disappeared from the gathering throng in the large room of the hotel, dashed down the steps, and hurried along the narrow pavement toward the Golden Dragon. The proprietor was standing in the hallway with his hands behind him, a usual attitude with the Dragon.

"Where," gasped Robbins, "is Mr.—Mr.——" and then he remembered he didn't know the name. "Where is the Living Skeleton?"

"He has gone to his room," answered the Dragon, "he went early to-night—he wasn't feeling well, I think."

"What is the number of his room?"

"No. 40," and the proprietor rang a loud, jangling bell, whereupon one of the chambermaids appeared. "Show this gentleman to No. 40."

The girl preceded Robbins up the stairs. Once she looked over her shoulder, and said in a whisper, "Is he worse?"

"I don't know," answered Robbins; "that's what I have come to see."

At No. 40 the girl paused and rapped lightly on the door panel. There was no response. She rapped again, this time louder. There was still no response.

"Try the door," said Robbins.

"I am afraid to," said the girl.

"Why?"

"Because he said if he were asleep the door would be locked, and if he were dead the door would be open."

"When did he say that?"

"He said it several times, sir, and about a week ago the last time."

Robbins turned the handle of the door; it was not locked. A dim light was in the room, but a screen before the door hid it from sight. When he passed around the screen, he saw, upon the square marble-topped arrangement at the head of the bed, a candle burning, and its light shone on the dead face of the Skeleton, which had a grim smile on its thin lips, while in its clinched hand was a letter addressed to the proprietor of the hotel.

The Living Skeleton had given more than the eighty francs to that deserving charity.

A DIVINE FEAST

BY CHARLES AUBERT

The love of a poor, young poet for a great lady is the theme of this gracefully written and humorous sketch, in which an extremely informal dinner plays a most important part. Translated by Emma Frances Dawson.

In those days I was very poor and very sentimental.

My black coat was so threadbare, the cloth was so worn that I dared not put it on or take it off without the greatest precautions; the knees of my pantaloons shone like satin; my hat was at the age when little girls know how to fib; and as to my boots, modesty prevents my telling by what ingenious efforts I managed to keep the inconstant soles.

All my fortune was composed of some manuscripts in prose and verse, which had already made me the terror of a number of editors.

Oh, I was truly very poor and very sentimental!

When I have said that I wore my hair long, falling on my coat collar; that I was slender and delicate; that I had a pale face, a large nose and ecstatic eyes, one can see what a sorry figure I made.

It was the first night of a new play at the Comédie Française. I knew the Princess Loubanoff would be there, and I would sooner lose one of my eyes than this opportunity of seeing—though it might be but for an instant—the radiant creature who had captivated my soul. Luckily I possessed the sum necessary to pay for the modest place I longed for, and a small surplus. Dinner time approached. I was hungry, and, in haste to get rid of that prosaic need, I spent my surplus money for some fried potatoes, intending to drink at the first fountain I came to. What could I desire more?

But I had reckoned without the most cruel of my faults—that which has always poisoned my existence—pride. I could never say which was the most painful to me, to be poor or to appear so.

I had no sooner got my paper horn of plenty full of potatoes in my hand than I became much embarrassed, imagining that everybody looked at me with compassion. However, I lived too far away to think of returning home.

“Bah!” I said to myself. “They may think what they

like. I am going to eat my potatoes in the face of the passers-by!"

And as I walked I began my repast. But I had not swallowed the first mouthful when a beautiful young girl, coquettishly dressed, passed close to me and looked at me. There was so much kindness in her gaze, her pretty eyes expressed so well her regret at seeing me dine so poorly, that nothing more was needed to overcome me completely. Ashamed, I lowered my head, and, feeling myself redden to my ears, I passed very quickly. I had scarcely taken three steps when yielding to I know not what sympathetic influence, I turned. The young girl had turned at the same instant, and for one second I met her sweet glance. Evidently I had inspired her with interest, perhaps with pity. Much mortified, I hastened on, avoiding crowded streets.

If I had listened only to my vexation I should have flung my potatoes in a corner, but my appetite having mastered my self-love I sought some quarter where I might shelter myself from the stares of the curious, and chose a gateway which was completely deserted. I sank down there, and leaning against the wall near a flight of steps I again attacked my fried potatoes, which seemed to me delicious. There, at least, I might hope calmly to finish my repast, and, again seized by the sweet, by the intoxicating obsession which pursued me everywhere, I plunged into contemplation of my love. "In a few hours," I said to myself, with joyous little thrills, "in a few hours I shall see her! Perhaps as she goes through the lobby she may give me a lovely smile." And then in imagination I saw her fine lips move, while her large eyes half veiled themselves. Oh! I knew exactly how she smiled, how she walked, with what dainty airs she turned her head to listen. I could imitate her slightest gestures, repeat her flute-like intonations, modulated like the warbling of a nightingale; I even owed to her the habit I had of passing the tip of my tongue over my upper lip. But what I could never find words to express was her turbulence of a spoiled child, the cajoling, almost familiar ways with which she glided into the heart of every one and coolly installed herself there forever. She was a true, an exquisite Parisian, the widow of Prince Loubanoff—a widow of nineteen, with her intact freshness of a young girl, and with eyes possessed, as by an evil spirit, with insatiable coquetry.

I would have given my life to kiss her hands. At home I had arrived at kneeling down to think of her. Certainly I was insane.

It was hinted that the princess was not a dragon of virtue, and ill-disposed tongues pretended that she was singularly capricious and perverse. But what could I hope from so grand a lady—I, most pitiable poet, when her beauty, her riches, her independence, drew around her a throng of the most powerful, the most illustrious adorers? It is true that since I had been presented to her, that is, for six months, she had shown interest in me, and never seemed annoyed to see me pale and tremble every time she spoke to me. She would allow, discreetly allow me to die of love for her, as she permitted the flowers that adorned her breast to die in exhaling their soul of perfume. That was all.

I had not yet eaten a quarter of my fried potatoes when I was obliged to pause in my repast. There was the rustle of a dress on the steps. I hid my cornucopia, and, assuming the indifferent air of one who waits, I did not move. But the nearer that rustling of silken draperies approached, my heart beat more violently without any reason. A sort of instinct told me something my spirit could not know. Suddenly a radiant vision agitated my whole being; a form, a brilliance, a perfume familiar—beloved! I closed my eyes.

Then a golden voice said in my ear, "Ah, my dear poet, how delighted I am to meet you!"

I had barely time to slip my horn of fried potatoes into my coat pocket.

"Madam—I bless the chance!"

"I was thinking about you."

"Really!"

"I was going to write to you."

Unable to master my emotion I could only stammer incoherent phrases.

The princess, on the contrary, talked volubly and appeared enchanted with the meeting.

"They have sent me a Muscovite romance. I am enthusiastic over the music. You know Russian. I have counted on you to translate the words."

"I am at your service."

"Come quick; I will take you."

I opened my eyes very wide. "You will take me?"

The princess had drawn me to her carriage. She sprang lightly in, and making a place for me, "Come, get in," said she.

I was astounded. And thinking of what was in my coat pocket, "Oh, no, madam, I cannot——"

"Why not?"

"I did not expect——"

"How boyish you are!" she said, smiling. "Get in; I command you."

It was necessary to obey. An instant after I felt myself borne rapidly along. I was dizzy. My emotion was so great that I could not breathe. The princess doubtless perceived this, for again I saw her smile. Wishing to increase my confusion, she leaned toward me.

"You were waiting for me just now?" she asked sweetly.

"Oh, no, madam, I swear to you——"

"Then what were you doing on the steps of the Baron de Lucques?"

What answer could be given? Could I own that I had taken refuge there to eat my fried potatoes? I blushed furiously without being able to think of the smallest fib, and the princess could only conclude that I had followed and waited for her. It did not appear to displease her, for she presently began again, "Do you know, sir, that I have great compliments to pay you? I have read all your poems, all, and I have found them very beautiful."

"Ah, madam, is it true?"

"Really they have touched me. You will publish them?"

"Never."

"What, never? You will conceal them from the public."

"It is enough for me that you have read them."

"That is almost a declaration, sir," she cried; "your poems are all of love!"

I remained voiceless, but my eyes were so eloquent that the princess had to lower hers.

"Ah, sir poets," she resumed, "what beautiful loves you have in your heads!"

"In our heads!" I cried. "Ah, madam, be persuaded that one never talks well of love except from his heart, and if I were a woman it seems to me that I could not be deceived."

The subject of conversation was not of a nature to make me find the time long. We reached the Avenue d'Eylau as by enchantment. The carriage entered the courtyard and I

helped the princess to leave it. I kept her little hand in mine as we went up the stairs, a vast staircase, mysterious like a temple, and covered with carpet where our footfalls made no sound. We had talked of nothing but love, and I was so full of my subject, I expressed myself with so much warmth, that a sweet intimacy was not slow to establish itself between us. We had ascended a dozen steps and found ourselves under the light of the candelabra when the young lady stopped.

"Then," she said in a low voice, "you, too, you love me?"

"That love is all my life, madam!"

"It is easy to say that one loves—but, the proof?"

"The proof?"

I still held the hand of the princess, who looked into my eyes as if to read my soul.

"Yes," she repeated, "the proof."

Had I the time to improvise an ardent plea, to tell her all I felt, to multiply words? It was impossible. I was wildly excited; a brilliant idea crossed my mind. And then her eyes were so alluring! Yielding to the irresistible temptation I caught her in my arms, and, for an instant, my lips sought hers.

At last they met! Oh, that was a kiss of despair; a supreme kiss wherein I seemed to lose my life! it was no longer the princess palpitating in my strong arms, but the beloved woman who thrilled at my touch and whose soul I drank. I do not know how long it lasted; we whirled upon the steps.

Then I saw the princess clinging to the gilded railing, very pale, her eyes closed. She held one hand on her breast and seemed to no longer breathe. As for me, I trembled like a criminal. When she opened her eyes she frowned at first, then her face softened and I saw that she tried to smile.

"You use singular arguments," she said in a light tone, from which it was impossible to divine what was passing in her mind.

At this moment we heard the sound of a door some one opened. The waiting-maid of the princess came to tell her mistress that many callers awaited her.

They were Mme. Gravier de Miret and her three big bachelor sons, the handsome Duke de Maules, the little Vicomte de Vombelles, and the lively Marquis de Musirolles. Mme. de Miret ran to embrace the princess.

"Ah, my dear," said she, "you did not expect to find such a large court. Nobody wanted to go without having seen you."

The princess would not allow them to depart immediately, and with her bewitching grace began to chat, saying all the time the prettiest things.

I was very little acquainted with this brilliant company, and the lovers of the princess especially cast upon me stealthy looks, full of defiance and jealousy. But I gave no attention to them nor to the conversation, interesting as it was, because a small personage to whom I had not yet been presented was all the time causing me the most cruel alarm. This was M. Bonbon, the dog of the princess, a griffon of pedigree, a rare and marvellous beast as large as my two fists, and who had cost the price of an ox. It is inconceivable to what extent these little animals, reared in opulence, can become foppish and ridiculously vain. There is something of the vulgar upstart in their small heads. When I first entered he sprang from the arm-chair, where he was coddling himself in soft drowsiness, and came straight to me, eying me from head to foot, showing by most expressive grimaces the disdain and astonishment inspired by a visitor so ill dressed. "Why do they admit people of that sort?" he seemed to say. Then, running around me, he gave a long growl, which doubtless contained all the abusive language that a dog could utter to a man. My boots, above all, appeared to him monstrous. He touched them with the tip of his paw, smelled of them with a disgusted air, and carried his insolence so far as to pretend to sneeze. At last he turned his back on me and walked off, stopping now and then to look sideways at me. It was plain that he would have had me thrown out at the door if he had been able. Hoping that M. Bonbon would cease his impertinences, I took a seat. He was placed on the knees of his mistress, and, indifferent to the caresses of the pretty hand that patted him, he gave me ugly glances that did not alarm me. Alas! he had other malice in store for me. Presently he raised his head, his nostrils dilated right and left, he gave a series of little sniffs as if he inhaled an unaccustomed odor.

"What is the matter with him now?" I asked myself uneasily. Then a subtle emanation surrounded me. Gradually the scent became stronger and more noticeable. Sud-

denly I comprehended the frightful truth. The fried potatoes I had in the pocket of my coat were tainting the drawing-room. No words could express the anguish into which this discovery plunged me. I might hope that the delicate people around me would not suspect the truth, but M. Bonbon was not to be deceived. Whether he was allured by the odor and merely yielded to his greediness, or in his ill-nature took a spiteful pleasure in denouncing me, the detestable dog leaped to the floor and bounded toward me. Then, standing on his hind legs, he sniffed at me from every side until he had discovered the pocket that held the provisions, and upon which he at once made a desperate attack.

I tried to seize him; he escaped me. I tried to push him away with my foot. I pulled my chair back; lost pains. The foolish little beast was determined to see what I had in my pocket, and nothing could make him abandon that idea. It was necessary to take a heroic stand. I rose, and, bringing under me the dangerous skirt containing the rest of my dinner, I sat down on it to shelter it from the enterprising M. Bonbon and stifle the betraying perfume.

Then my ferocious persecutor jumped on a neighboring chair and yelped with fury. After that he began to scratch my thigh with his forepaws as if he intended to disrobe me.

"How I would like to poison you," I said mentally, looking at the accursed brute with a sinister eye. General attention was attracted to me. I was in a mortal fright.

"What can ail little Bonbon?" the princess had already been asking. She came to my side to take him.

"Now she will smell the fried potatoes," I thought, becoming scarlet.

For a moment I had an idea of making a wild flight. But already everybody was rising.

"Wait a moment," the princess begged her friends. "I want you to hear my Russian romance." And coming to me with the music in her hand she said with her irresistible grace: "Pray, sir, sing a verse; you will give me the greatest pleasure."

She herself placed the music on the rack, and I sat down to the piano. It was a melancholy popular song that I had learned during my stay in Russia, and, desirous of pleasing, I sang it with all my sensibility.

There was a general, flattering murmur; my slight voice

had moved all hearts. I was triumphant, when I felt myself disturbed by a tugging and pulling at my coat. Aware that M. Bonbon was renewing his hostilities, I turned quickly, but it was already too late.

The infernal animal had had time to rummage in my pocket and had dragged out the horn of plenty! Now he held it in his tiny jaws, and, shaking it violently, scattered the fried potatoes in every direction on the carpet!

Overwhelmed with confusion, I remained dumfounded—a veil before my eyes, a ringing in my ears. I had a vague sense that there were exclamations of surprise and ill-suppressed laughs. Then there was a general retreat. Alone with the princess, I rose and made some unsteady steps toward the door. She stopped me.

“You will dine with me?” she asked in a voice sweetly earnest.

This last blow finished me. Could she not understand that at such a moment an invitation to dine resembled a charity? I wanted to speak, but I was suffocating.

As she drew nearer, I turned my head away to conceal from her the tears in my eyes, and I rushed away, overcome with shame and grief.

I lived in a pretty little room in the top story of a high house. That is where I went to abandon myself to despair. I flung myself on my bed, crushed under the breaking up of my dreams. The dreadful idea that I had been ridiculous before the woman I loved was continually crossing my mind. Now the princess knew both my misery and my love. That kiss I had stolen from her upon the stairs she might otherwise have been able to pardon, but how allow such audacity on the part of a man who carried his dinner in his coat pocket? For half an hour I sought vainly for a little relief to my chagrin, and with sorrowful soul I was looking upon the future as a black immensity without stars, when there came a gentle knocking at my door.

I started. Then sending the visitor to the infernal regions, I went to open the door, resolved to quickly get rid of the importunate person.

But when I saw the new-comer I drew back in amazement.

“You!” I cried.

“Yes.”

“You, princess; you here?”

She appeared much moved, and her voice trembled.

"Yes," she said, with a divine smile, "You would not dine with me: I have come to dine with you."

"To dine!!!"

With this exclamation I looked about me, vaguely imagining that, since the princess was in my quarters, it would be no greater marvel to see my attic transformed into a banquet hall.

"Do not be uneasy," she continued; "foreseeing that you would not be prepared for my visit, I have brought all that is necessary."

It was not until then that I noticed she had something in her hands, and, again wounded in my pride, I frowned in abominable fashion.

"Oh! I beg of you," said she, very humbly and very sweetly, "don't be vexed, don't send me away; let me satisfy a caprice." Then going to the table she unfolded a large newspaper. "See!" said she.

I uttered a cry of surprise. She had brought nothing but a cornucopia filled with fried potatoes.

"I know very well," said the gracious woman, "it is the dinner of a poet, and that I am unworthy to share it; for this time, though, the Muses may allow me to take part."

I threw myself upon my knees and covered her hands with kisses. "Oh, how I love you!" I sighed.

"Nonsense! Get up and lay the table-cloth; I am dying with hunger."

I could not believe in so much happiness. "You, you, princess—it is really you?"

She took off her hat and cloak. "It is very nice here; you must have a superb view. I should like it here myself if they would let me live so."

"You want to make me crazy?"

She went and came lightly as a bird, touching everything with infantine curiosity.

"You know," said she suddenly, "the Marquis de Musirolles has often begged me to give him Bonbon—well, to-night I sent the dog to him." And, without giving me time to speak: "Will you allow me to open that closet? Napkins, good; that is all I wanted—don't disturb yourself." With adorable gravity she spread a napkin on the table as a cloth and opened the cornucopia which contained the fried potatoes.

"Please, princess, let that be."

"Not at all; I am going to keep house."

"You will soil your dress." Possessed by a spirit of coquetry, she cast aside a lace shawl and revealed her beautiful shoulders and arms. What a radiant apparition! Transfigured by the light of her dazzling charms, the exquisite creature seemed to me to be endowed with supernatural loveliness. I clasped my hands in a transport of admiration, and was about to pour forth my love when she put her little hand over my mouth. "I know it, I know it," said she; "but come, tell me, where are the glasses?"

"The glasses? I have but one!"

"But one!—oh! oh!" Then, with a gesture of contempt, "Bah!"

Having found out that the pitcher was full of pure water she placed it beside the glass and assuming a satisfied air—"There!" she cried, "I have forgotten nothing. Come then, all is ready."

She flung herself upon the sofa, and at once, with the mien of a gourmand, daintily dipped her slender, pink fingers into the fried potatoes and began to eat, crunching them as if she had never tasted anything more delicious. I sat down beside her and imitated her.

"Do you know that I bought them myself?"

"You, princess!"

She tried to imitate the manner and speech of the shopkeeper, but ended in a wild burst of laughter. Then, having poured the large glass full of water, she drank half and offered me the rest.

"Drink," said she, "drink!" I emptied the glass with one draught and resumed my absorbed contemplation of the beautiful creature.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked.

"I am intoxicated."

"Already! Gracious! What will it be when we have finished the pitcher? Come, eat."

"I am eating," I said, devouring her with my eyes.

"Come, be wise; it is necessary to dine."

But it took us a long time to finish our fried potatoes. Oh, the delicious feast!

ETCHINGS: A REINCARNATION

BY LILLIAN L. PRICE

A quaintly conceived suggestion of transmigration in New England.

Two heads bobbing over long gray socks by the fireside.

"Yes—John was plum peculiar. 'I'll come *back* an' sojourn with you,' says he th' day afore he died. 'An' like enough I'll be a yaller dog,' says he. "'Twill be jes' my luck'!" Neighbor Martin rolls up her sock and dons her sunbonnet.

"I 'low your John entertained heathen views," she says, and then hurries down the path, and cross-lots toward home.

Standing at the door, the old lady watches her visitor's going, and turning gazes reflectively toward the asparagus bed. The feathery branches wave mysteriously.

"Suthin's in there!" The muzzle of a yellow dog appears and after it his lank body. Slowly he crept up to her.

"Well, I never! Where'd you come from? Shoo! Go' way!" But the dog is at her feet, and something in the dark, appealing eyes holds her spell-bound. A chill seizes her. She breathes fast; then, rallying, grasps a broom.

"Git outen th' yard!" The dog crouches and licks her shoe.

"He said how's he might come back a pore yaller dog!" The broom drops weakly. "John Bascom, ef so be your spirit is come back to me a grovelling in this beast as ye said, gimme a sign!" Two shaggy paws leap upon her shoulders and there is a warm dog's tongue on her cheek.

"Git down!" she cries, shuddering. "Go 'way an' let me git used to th' notion!" And she gropes her way into the house and flings herself beside John's vacant chair. The rickety wall-clock ticks another half-hour away. Long gray shadows steal across the room. The silent old woman kneels in the twilight. The door opens, and across the floor creeps the yellow dog, whining piteously and nestling at her feet.

"Well, John," she says, "ef so be as it *is* you, why stay, an' I'll try to git used to you! You was allus a terrible hand fer havin' your own way!"

Her fingers caress the dog's head.

A queer twinkle lights her face. "Now it's my turn to hev th' lead," she says quaintly. "Git under th' stove an' stay there, John Bascom!"

A TALE OF THE BULL RING

An exciting story of a Spanish lover who enters the arena at the bidding of the loved one, and there, in the moment of success, meets his fate.
From Blackwood's Magazine.

I was early in my seat, for I like, above all things, to see the motley crowd of sun-burned Spaniards come trooping to their national game. I was not in the *sombra* or shady seats, for I prefer to take my place among the crowd, one of whom I almost am now; and, moreover, what right has a penniless young artist to spend a dollar on seeing a bull-fight?

How noisy and hot and dusty they all looked as they trooped in and took their seats around me! I was surprised at the crowd; there was no great *matador* going to kill bulls to-day, yet all the cheaper seats were filling.

I asked my neighbor, a peasant in a flat black hat, trousers, and highly decorated gaiters and a bright waistcoat, and wearing his coat slung from his shoulders.

"Señor," I said, "can you tell me why so many people are here to-day?"

He looked at me a moment with an expression of surprise.

"You do not know!" He spoke with a strong Andalusian accent. "Sebastian will kill the bull."

"Sebastian?" I said. "Señor, do not think me ignorant, but I know no bull-fighter of that name."

He laughed.

"He has never killed a bull before; to-day is his first. He comes from this part; that is why every one is here." Then he added, "I will tell you his story. Sebastian is only a muleteer, who once a week drives a caravan of mules from his mountain village to this town. Once a week he comes with his burden of fruit. But he is poor; the mules are not his; he only works for another." He paused for a moment and he added, "You are a stranger here?"

"Yes," I said. "I only arrived yesterday."

"Then you do not know Juanita—La Bella Juanita, we call her?" He did not wait for me to answer his question, but continued: "Every one falls in love with Juanita, and Sebastian, like the rest, did too. He prayed and besought her to marry him, but she is proud and would not look at the humble muleteer. But after a time his handsome face

and oft-repeated tale impressed her; so she told him she would marry him if he would kill a bull in the ring at to-day's fair. But, hush! Here she is."

I turned in the direction in which he was pointing, and gazed with astonishment at one of the most lovely creatures it has ever been my lot to see. All eyes were fixed on her, yet she was as impassive as if she were alone. Her light, golden hair—not uncommon among the Spaniards—was bound up high upon her head, and surmounted by a dark crimson rose, which held in its place her mantilla of black lace.

It was time the bull-fight commenced, and already the impatient Spaniards were shouting and calling, but yet the *gobernador* had not taken his seat in the box reserved. I was all-impatient to see Sebastian, and his was the first bull to be killed. I gazed hastily round the ring; what an anomaly it presented! Behind and around me were the jaunty, dusty crowd, among whom passed and repassed the sellers of water, with their shrill cry of "Agua! agua fresca!" and the venders of biscuits and nuts. Below is the arena with its burning yellow sand, a miniature desert. Suddenly the band commenced to play. I turned and saw that the administrator's box was no longer empty. A small man, in a black coat and a silk hat, had taken his seat, surrounded by half a dozen officers in full uniform. One by one the spears of the *picadors* were handed to them, and he measured the points to see that none were beyond the prescribed length—sufficient to slightly wound and enrage the bull without endangering its life or injuring it seriously.

Four of the *matadors* were professionals; the fifth—to whom was given the place of honor in the centre and slightly ahead—was Sebastian. All eyes were turned on him.

A gate is opened in the arena. With a roar, and a shout from the people, the bull rushes from his darkened cell into the ring. He looks around him: for a moment he paws the ground; then, led on by the moving cloak of one of the *matadors*, he charges. A graceful bend of the body and a slight movement to one side, and the bull has passed his quarry, who stands untouched and smiling behind him. For a moment "toro" stands as if stupefied; then espies a larger and safer bait, and with a fearful rush lifts horse and *picador* into the air, hurling them to the ground in a heap. The *matadors* are quick, however, and, while the *picador* is

being helped to his feet and the attendants are unsaddling the horse, fast bleeding to death from a wound in its side, they call off the bull by waving their cloaks and keep his attention fixed on themselves. He is a good bull. The people are delighted. "Bravo, toro!" they cry.

Two of the *matadors* step to the side of the arena, leaving their cloaks and taking in each hand a *banderillo*. They step into the centre of the ring, and, poising themselves on tiptoe, holding the *banderillos* far above their heads at arm's length, face the bull. A moment the now furious beast pauses, then with a charge makes for one of his adversaries; for a second all is a cloud of dust, in which the forms of bull and man are scarcely discernible; the next, the bull is bellowing round the ring with the points of the *banderillos* fast in his shoulders, and the *banderillero* is smiling and bowing unscathed.

The bugle sounds.

Sebastian, who up till now has gazed in a careless way at the scene, steps forward, takes the sword and the flag, and with a gallant stride marches to the administrator's box, where he swears to kill the bull.

There is a deafening cheer as he throws his hat among the people, to be held till he returns victorious—or dead.

I turned instinctively toward Juanita; she was leaning back slowly fanning herself, her half-closed eyes scarcely conveying an expression of interest in the proceedings.

Sebastian faces the bull, the flag in his left hand, his eyes watching the beast's. His hand is as steady as a rock.

The bull charges; I drew a quick breath; Sebastian is all right; gracefully, with the ease of a practised bull-fighter, he escaped the horns, which merely touched the scarlet flag.

A cheer rings out from the crowd, bringing a flush to his cheek.

Again the bull charges, again and again; each time Sebastian is unscathed, but as yet he has had no chance of killing the bull. He is facing it now; slowly he raises the sword—the point never trembles. For one second all is dust, the next I saw his manly form laid out full length in the sand.

Accustomed as I am to bull-fights, I shuddered.

"He is killed!" cry the people, "he is killed!" The bull never looks at him again, passing on to attack the cloak of one of the *matadors*. I gazed at Juanita once more. Her expression has not altered to the least degree; her fan merely vibrates a little quicker. I hated the woman.

A shout from the people recalls my attention. Sebastian has risen, picked up the sword and flag, and is facing the bull once more. There was silence in the ring like death. Again the sword is raised, again all is dust, again a form lies prostrate in the sand—but this time it is the bull! Sebastian has killed it at one stroke, a feat seldom accomplished by even the masters of the art.

Never have I heard such a shout as rang through and through the building as Sebastian approached the *gobernado* and bowed. He is paler than ever, but a smile of victory lights up his lips. Then, sword in hand, he turned, approached and faced Juanita, his dark eyes gazing into her face. Her expression is the same as ever; as he bows to her, she never alters a feature. There is no smile of encouragement, scarcely a sign of recognition; she plucks a rose, however, from her breast and throws it to him.

He stoops and picks it up, and, with his eyes fixed on hers, lifts it toward his lips—hesitates—throws it to the ground, and tramples it under foot.

A deafening cheer arises from the crowd—cheer upon cheer. I looked for Juanita. She had left the ring.

Five minutes later, as Sebastian passed through the archway into the open air, still in his deep scarlet and gold, a dagger was buried deep in his breast.

I saw Juanita do it, and it was the only time I ever saw her smile.

THAT CHURCH PICTURE

BY O'MONROY

The obvious moral of this amusing sketch is to "look well before buying"—especially when executing a commission for the purchase of a church picture. Translated by Mrs. E. C. Waggener.

TO M. RAOUL DE PARABÈRE, Captain Twentieth Cuirassiers,
Paris, France:

MY DEAR BOY AND EX-PUPIL—You remember, I am very sure, the numerous punishments I was forced to inflict upon you in your youthful days for your too pronounced taste for sketching, and sketching upon any and all things. Even my prayer-books were covered with outlines, not always as correct as they should have been, that came from your pen. I also know that at St. Cyr this talent of yours had not its equal. Briefly, with these facts in mind, you are the man I want. But now to explain this preamble.

Since your school-days I have become the curé of Avricourt, a small parish by no means rich and with a church decidedly shabby, weather-worn, and with one of the panels of the wall in a condition that truly afflicts me. It has a spot upon it produced by moisture—in fact, a former leak—some three metres long by as many high, and which I desire to conceal by a picture of the same dimensions. It has occurred to me that perhaps you could find this prize for me in Paris, at auction possibly or in some kindred establishment. But I must limit you as to price, since the committee who have the settlement for the picture in charge will pay for same but five and fifty francs, frame included. Only select a Biblical subject, from the Old or New Testament as suits you—for the rest I rely entirely upon you. Attend to this immediately, and may heaven keep you, my own dear lad. Your old and affectionate preceptor.

MIGUEL, Curé of Avricourt.

TO M. L'ABBÉ MIGUEL, Curé of Avricourt, Province of A——,
France:

MY DEAR ABBÉ—I will start the campaign at once, though a picture three metres square or thereabouts, at five and fifty francs, frame included, is not a very easy thing to find. However, I shall do my best; count upon me.

Your old and grateful pupil,
PARABÈRE, Captain Twentieth Cuirassiers.

When Raoul de Parabère had written and sent off this short and somewhat laconic letter—he was a busy man with his garrison duties and had a limited number of hours in the day to devote to his own amusement—he sat himself down and began to reflect with seriousness upon the task before him.

"Simply a gigantic task!" he told himself. How the deuce was he to find a Biblical picture of these huge dimensions, and how the deuce could he possibly spare a moment to hunt for it? He saw himself demanding from the commandant a leave of absence upon such a commission! He'd certainly send him to the right-about and to the devil besides!

But Raoul de Parabère, with all his faults, had an excellent heart. So the more he thought of the little church and its needs, the more he felt inclined to make the attempt; and as the curé, of whom he was really very fond, had written him to be in haste about it, he might as well start at once on his first essay.

And Parabère, leaping to his feet, dismissed his orderly and his waiting mount, hailed a passing *fiacre* and ran to the Hôtel de Ventes, the likeliest place he could think of at the moment and where he found everything but what he sought—a Biblical picture. And the next day, and the day after and the day after that, between the hours of official duty and a few other things, Parabère followed precisely the same trail—in addition rummaged the bric-à-brac shops and the stalls for odds and ends—still without success.

He had really begun to despair, when he recalled the shop of a certain Mme. Lardêche, an old acquaintance of his, who knew where to put her finger, day or night, upon those charming trifles in Sèvres and those trinkets so necessary to bestow upon friends who of course love you for yourself alone.

In this marvellous collection of Mme. Lardêche's one always had a choice of pretty things that had an air of costing nothing at all till you came to pay for them—and then!

But what did that matter when every article in the establishment had a number, history, and genealogical tree to prove its antiquity?

"I shall certainly not find at her house, my picture or any other picture at five-and-fifty francs, frame included," thought Parabère, disconsolately, "still it's the last chance, and if the price runs above the mark, *parbleu!* I'll make up the figure."

And he entered to find Mme. Lardêche, as usual, like a gorgeous spider awaiting her prey, enthroned in a Mme. de Maintenon chair, and, truly, not unlike that lady herself, with her touch of rouge upon the cheekbones, her patches, and her lust of gold.

"Ah, is it you, my captain?" she exclaimed on seeing him enter, "is it really you? and a whole month since you paid me a call! You've changed your mind, then, and decided to take that bit of Sèvres for Mlle. Regnier of the Gaîté? A lovely trifle!"

"No, my dear Mme. Lardêche, my errand to-day is a serious one. I am seeking a picture, a church picture—think of it!—some three to five metres square," and as Parabère talked on, unfolding to her the mission he was expected to fill, the face of Mme. Lardêche expanded, more and more, into a broad and unctuous smile.

"A providence!" she cried. "A providence in truth! I have precisely what you want, above there," pointing to the loft—"a church picture and by a great painter; but so huge, so very huge, that no one would ever buy it. I will sell it to you, M. de Parabère, for the merest song."

"Bravo! and this church picture represents——"

"I do not know, that is, exactly; something taken from sacred history; still, if you want a special subject——"

"No, no, not at all," said Parabère, alarmed lest the prize should slip through his fingers; "the subject is a matter of positive indifference to me, provided it is Biblical and the canvas of the requisite size."

"Three to five metres, you said? Oh, it's all of that! But, come, see it for yourself; it's here in the loft."

"The loft? No, thanks, I'm pressed for time as it is. I leave it to your judgment. What do you want for it?"

"Frame included? *Eh, bien*, fifty louis—dirt cheap at that."

"I'll give you thirty; boxing and expressage prepaid. Address the Abbé Miguel, Curé of Avricourt, to be shipped immediately. Do you agree?"

Mme. Lardêche battled a moment. The picture was immense! the painting superb! the frame a veritable antique. Then—she yielded and the bargain was sealed.

Two hours later the worthy Curé Miguel, at his frugal tea, received a message destined to set the parish wild with delight—

Picture purchased, superb, right size, five and fifty francs, frame included, boxed, expressed, and shipped. PARABÈRE.

It was but little after daylight the next morning when the Curé Miguel gathered together the committees on funds

and arrangements, and laid before them not only the good news of the picture's coming, but also, with a certain prideful pomp, the necessity for its proper reception. He could scarcely believe that that spot of humidity, which had so long distracted and divided his attention with his religious duties, was going to disappear at last, to actually pass from sight behind the radiant colors of a broad and glowing canvas—all for the insignificant sum of five and fifty francs!

To skip details, however, and, the discussion that followed between the abbé and the committees—torn between a desire to greet the picture with all due honor and the natural economy of all church committees—it was finally decided that nothing short of a grand procession could fill the bill and still please all parties.

The abbé himself, as curé of the church, attended by his acolytes, the choir and chorister boys, was to lead the cortège and escort the box to the sacristy of the chapel, where it was to be opened in the presence of the assembled people; and Mme. la Duchesse de Precy-Brussac, the head of the reception committee, was to set to work immediately upon the fashioning of gorgeous garlands and the erection of a suitable and imposing *reposoir*.

A *reposoir* constructed from the park benches arranged in a square, decorated with colored streamers, all the available casts of holy saints to be borrowed in the neighborhood, a number of china vases, and a limitless quantity of trailing vines and potted flowers.

But, with all these preparations, it was fully twelve o'clock before the procession, which had swelled to a big one, was well under way, the participants walking two by two; the curé and the Little Sisters of the Poor, at the head of the line, under a beautiful banner of purple satin embroidered with gold. Next came the choir and the chorister boys, followed by the van from the police station, hung with white and wreathed with blossoms, thanks again to the taste of Mme. la Duchesse.

Flanking this chariot, and presenting a most martial aspect with their brass helmets sparkling and shining in the rays of the sun, marched the brave Captain Balligan and his corps of firemen. Behind the firemen came the beadle of the church, behind the beadle the greater part of the population of the village of Avricourt, among whom one saw, resplen-

dent, the Duke and Duchess of Precy-Brussac, the distributor of contributions, and the lieutenant of gendarmerie. Only the Maire, his assistant and the schoolmaster, for the sake of example, had consented to stay at home.

And all along the route the choir sang psalms and praises, the choristers swung their censers; the station-master came a square to meet them to tell them the box had already arrived; and, when the curé had blessed it and four of the firemen had lifted and shouldered it to its place in the wagon, the long procession faced about and returned majestically across the plain.

The incense mingled its intoxicating breath with the resinous odor of woods and fields, the voices of the singers rose and fell in soft and rhythmic cadence, repeated by the voice of the distant hills, and everywhere throughout the country the peasants, men and women, abandoned their work to stand with gaping mouths and uncovered heads as the great box passed on its way.

The curé had only one regret, that his dear lad, Raoul de Parabère, was absent and could not witness the crowning triumph of his efforts. But words fail me. Picture for yourself that fateful moment when, at last, the box was placed in the sacristy and the carpenter, old Père Virgile, on his knees beside it, made the nails leap from the planks that had shielded it on the way; while at his elbow, on her knees too, was the directress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, whom the worthy curé had selected from all that multitude for the final lifting of the veil. Picture for yourselves, also, the amazement of the faithful, when the good Sœur Anne, folding back with eager fingers the baize that still curtained the face of the picture, dropped it again instantly, as if it burned her, and with a cry that certainly sounded like a cry of horror.

"Well, well, my sister," cried the curé, impatiently, believing her, in his innocent soul, only bewildered by the beauty of the picture, "off with it, please; off with it."

"Off with it? Pardon me, M. le Curé," and Sœur Anne rose up crimson as a poppy, "there is some mistake; I do not wish to unveil this picture!"

"You do not wish it?" repeated the curé, bewildered in his turn, "you do not wish to unveil the picture? So be it, Sœur Anne, so be it! Captain Balligan, will you oblige us?"

And the captain would and did—that is, to the extent of

one corner; but though he gazed longer and with more admiration than the directress had done, the picture's face was not unveiled when the gallant fireman stumbled to his feet.

"I—I am not a judge," said he, with a defensive air and an added redness upon his florid cheeks, "and if you please, M. le Curé——"

The captain got no farther in his little speech; the Duc de Precy-Brussac, out of patience with so much humming, hawing, and delay, had stepped behind him, and in the twinkling of an eye the picture was seen by all.

By all! And what is more, it was seen by the men with "ohs" and "ahs"; by the women with cries and blushes; by the good Sœur Anne with a frantic bound and an active wheeling of her youthful charges' faces to the wall.

"Bread and water and a week of penance to every one," she cried, "who dares to look around!"

The trouble?

The picture, of course! The picture of a nobly fashioned dame, reclining upon a couch, her costume, that of an undraped artist's model, who retains by the hem of his garment (a coat of many colors) the equally noble figure of a struggling man, seeking with might and main to run away—an artist's rendering of a Biblical story, Joseph and Mme. Potiphar, as the veriest child could see! But why go farther? The result was that the great church picture was closed in its box again, securely nailed, and the crowd dispersed; those on the outskirts, who had only had a passing and the briefest glimpse of this scandal, being even more indignant at the deprivation than the committee of payment over the loss of their five and fifty francs, while the good Curé Miguel was positively reduced to tears.

But the Curé Miguel, is heartbroken no longer; matters have been happily arranged, and the picture now hangs in its place hiding the objectionable spot. Joseph, provided with a pair of wings, a gilded trumpet, and a belligerent expression, has become the Angel Gabriel.

Mme. Potiphar—well, there is still some doubt as to what Mme. Potiphar has become. One thing only is certain, her present draperies are most voluminously ample. She wears upon her brow a nimbus of clouds and golden stars, and the velvet of her scarlet petticoat covers about half the wall of the little church.

ETCHINGS: A MASS FOR THE DEAD

BY JOHN JAMES MEEHAN

A tragic incident in Canada, under the French dominion.

Morning twilight over Mount Royal, one hundred and fifty years ago. The old St. Lawrence sweeping by. Far in the east, a few points of light are beginning to frame again the picture that entranced the soul of Cartier, on a September morn in 1535. It is the hour of morning mass. A score of French and friendly Indians are passing into the tower on the hill, to join a score already within the rude church. A dusky Indian priest is chanting the service in a monotone.

"Dies iræ, dies illa!" A short pause.

"Solvat sæclum in favillâ!"

The priest starts; the second line was not uttered by him! He walks toward the curtain of skins, at the side of the altar. He steps behind it. The audience hears a few muttered sounds. Three or four minutes pass. The curtain sways; the candles flicker. The priest resumes, but almost inaudibly. The dim torches flame above the kneeling worshippers. Heads are bent in reverent attitude; all heads but one. This one a woman's. She moves quickly in the upper gallery. She climbs to the highest stair, in the darkest corner. She leans on the rail, directly above the priest. She gazes downward with fevered interest.

"Et ne nos inducas in tentatione!" comes in a whisper from below. The acolyte makes no response. His eyes are fixed on the space above. The suspense is painful. The priest moves uneasily. He starts to speak, but the sound is lost in the thrum of a bow-string. The words end in a low gurgle, as he falls backward with an arrow sticking in his breast.

"Allondée!" cries the acolyte, pointing to the gallery.

"Murder!" shout the others.

"Sacrilege!" answers Allondée. "It is no priest. I have killed a traitor. The murder was done behind the curtain!"

And thus it was. A half-civilized Huron courier had stolen, even to the altar, to spy upon his enemies. The true priest was found beyond the curtain of skins. He had been struck with a blunt weapon, and stripped of his vestments. The bone handle of a knife stood out, straight from his heart.

THE PUERTO DE MEDINA

BY MAURICE KINGSLEY

A spirited and romantic incident of revolt against the grinding oppression of the Spanish rulers in Mexico a century ago. Under the seal of confession, the hero of the story is involuntarily betrayed by the girl who loves him. From Blackwood's Magazine.

Mexico, for many a year, has been famous and infamous for its highway robberies. At the present day these are but the acts of vulgar footpads or marauding bands of revolutionists. But a hundred years ago and more, when the pressure of the Spanish yoke was grinding the souls and bodies of the Mexican Indians to exasperation, and the first dawn of liberty began to glimmer through the minds of the boldest, there existed a different class of highway robbery, which perhaps might better be described as a guerilla warfare waged against their persecutors, the Spaniards.

Many a place has taken its name from some bold *guerillero*, now forgotten; and the scene of many a deed of daring, many a gallant struggle, is only marked to-day by a little pile of stones at the wayside, its history buried and forgotten.

One legend there is, though, of a spot called the "Puerto de Medina," on the boundary line of the State of Michoacan, and some two hundred miles from the City of Mexico on the great highway westward, that time cannot obliterate; and even to-day, before entering that steep defile, the rich landowner motions to his armed servants to close up and keep a bright look-out; the passengers in the jolting diligence look wistfully for their escort; and the master of the pack-train urges his laden mules forward, lest the ghost of old "Juan de Medina" burst from its grave under the cliff and swoop down upon them through the oaks, as he had done so oft in life on the Spaniard.

Few details are known of Medina's life, and all that I have been able to gather only show that the place took its name from him in this wise.

* * * * *

Somewhere about the middle of the last century, one steaming May night, a man stood beside the iron-barred windows of a house in the little town of Maravatio, chatting in low tones with a girl inside.

"I tell thee," said the man, "there is no fear; unless, indeed," he added after a pause, "my Chucha betrays me. Poor little one, but thou wouldst not do that for all the gold of the viceroy?"

"God of my life, no!" sighed the girl; "but, Juan, remember the risks you run coming here so often—though you are disguised, though the Coyote is all ready saddled in the pasture, some day you must be suspected; and, when once suspected, you are lost. Colonel Torres has sworn on the altar to avenge his brother; and that affair of the archbishop's money has set all the clergy against you. You are rich, and I have something; let us go from here and live a free life down on the coast."

"No, Chuchita *mia*, no! I must despoil the persecutors somewhat more. There are two *conductas* passing the *puerto* soon, and have them I must. Hist! *adios, vida mia!*" and he slipped away under the half-moonlight, almost brushing against two men at the corner.

Keeping well out of sight, they follow him to the edge of the town, where, springing over a stone wall, he whistled up a gray horse feeding in a meadow, and in a moment more was across the river and cantering away through the *mesquite* bushes on the plain beyond.

"*Caramba!* that was he," snarled one of the two; "and that was the Coyote! So ho, my friend! you are in love with the little Chucha, eh? It's a pity to stop your billing and cooing; but stop it I will before two weeks are out. Ah, Juan Medina, Juan Medina! trapped at last! And now let's off to Padre Hurtado's." In a few minutes the priest's house was reached, and the two were let in by a sleepy porter.

"*Ola, padre!* Get up and give us a bottle of 'Tinto' for our good news! We've tracked the wolf to his lair and the Coyote to his pasture. I shall have my revenge for my brother, and you for the fat old archbishop's gold!"

"Peace, my son!—not so loud; the fiend has friends everywhere. I come." And anon the broad figure of the priest steps out of a glass door on to the piazza.

"Estevan! *Tinto y copas*, and some whitefish salad. Ah, gentlemen, I was dreaming I was with Mahomet in Paradise, when your rough voice woke me, colonel!"

"Or with the houris?" laughed the other.

"Ah, my colonel, what a bad man you are, always to be

poking fun at a poor old fat priest! But a light, Estevan, and a table. Sit down, and keep your hats on."

A light and the wine were brought.

"To bed, Estevan. And now for your news, colonel."

"Padre," he answered, "Juan Medina has been in town three nights this week, and to-night I found out the petticoat that brings him here. Guess who it is."

"You are more likely to know than I, my friend. Say on."

"Chucha Delgado."

"Chucha!" and the heavy veins of the priest's coarse face knotted up, and he gripped hard at his glass. "The little devil!" he muttered.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the colonel. "He has touched you near, eh? Well, the easier for my project, which is this: Tax her with it in the confessional, and find out everything, under the threat of excommunication. Women can't stand that. And as for the rest, leave it and '*amigo* Juan' to me."

"Drink, drink, my friends!" exclaimed the priest, fiercely. "Colonel, in this cup I pledge your revenge, the archbishop's, and, above all, my own. You shall know all to-morrow."

The first two bottles were soon replaced by more, and dawn saw them separate at the priest's door.

At noon a girl was kneeling beside the confessional in a dark side-aisle of the little church, muttering low her tale of petty sins.

A pause.

"Is that all, my daughter?" said Father Hurtado's voice from within.

"That—is—is—all, padre *mio*."

"Ah, my daughter, from your tone I know that is *not* all. Better unconfessed than half-confessed. How can I absolve what I do not know? How can the most blessed Virgin intercede, when she knows of some secret sin still untold? Damned in this world by the weight of sin, the burden of which sinks like lead into the soul; and damned in the next for sin unabsolved! Think, think—repent ere it be too late!"

"O padre," sobbed the girl, "it is not my secret—it is another's. If I betray him——"

"Stop, my child," said the priest. "Betray him you cannot under the seal of confession. Remember what the Church says, 'Come unto me and I will give you rest'—rest in this

life for you, for him, and future glory. Only confess and be absolved."

And the poor girl sobbed out all her tale of woe—how she loved Juan Medina; how he had told her of having robbed the archbishop's gold; how he came to see her; and, in a word, everything she knew of him and his whereabouts, under the searching questions of the cunning priest. Weeping, the girl received the absolution from his hands, covered her face in her shawl, and glided out of the door; while the priest, with a cruel light in his eye, strode through the sacristy and down to Colonel Torres' quarters.

"Some wine, some wine, friend Torres, to take the taste out of my mouth. Curse the witch! it was hard to do. I almost hate myself for it. Why, kneeling there, sobbing, her upturned face in agony looked like that of the Madonna herself. But I have got all. He has a cave in the Zopilote Cañon, but mostly haunts the cliffs to the left, just above the *puerto*, and he will be in here again Saturday evening. Post some men on the east side of the *puerto*, so that if he escapes from here a squad can follow him, and he's sure to go up the cañon, pass the cave, and on to the high ground on the left; and there you'll have him between the men on the east and the cliff. Give me more wine!"

"All the wine you want, padre *mio*. And I suppose he always leaves the Coyote in the same pasture, eh?"

"Yes."

"Very well; now I know how to manage it. There's no use shooting the Indian dog; I want to catch him alive, and then devise some pretty little means of getting rid of him that may be alike objectionable to him and serve as a warning to the rest of these Indian brutes. I don't think he can get out of town; but if he does, we'll have him at the head of the cañon. Saturday, the day of the *conducta*, you say? Why, then, he's certain not to attack it; and I can send on a couple of hundred men the day before to the Jordanna to come back and corral him. A bumper! a bumper, sir priest! Cheer up, man! there's no one hurt yet; and when the lover's done for, you may have a chance with the pretty Chuchita."

"Peace, peace, you fool! I'm in no mood for raillery now. I tell you she has bewitched me," said the priest, rising. "*Adios*, colonel."

"*Adios*, Padre Hurtado. I kiss your hands."

The morning of the *conducta* came; but, contrary to the expectation of Colonel Torres, Juan Medina, with about forty armed men, sat awaiting it in a thick clump of oaks on the north side of the *puerto*. A long grass hillside, blooming with begonias after the first May rain, and studded with oaks, ran down to a little land-locked basin, shut in on one side by the hill on which were Juan and his companions; while on the other, the cliffs rose sheer some two hundred feet. At each end of this basin, the hill approached the cliff so abruptly and so closely as to form veritable natural gateways, between which crawled a winding, rocky road, dropping both on the west and east suddenly into valleys tributary to the River Lerma. On the west the cliffs turned northward beyond the gateway, rising higher and higher, until at about a mile away, where a large stream came into the valley, they were full five hundred feet in height.

"*Caramba!* what keeps them?" said Juan, testily.

"*Ola, José!* bring me the horse."

"Why, colonel," said one of a lounging group, "you are riding the red. Why didn't you have the Coyote! I am afraid it won't bring us good luck."

"Never fear," replied Juan, as a heavy, thick-set bay, with black points, was led up. "The Coyote has work to do for to-night, and, if the bay cannot carry me, I can go on foot. *Caramba!* a *burro* would be good enough to take in this *conducta*. Only two hundred men! Pshaw! I wonder, though, where that two hundred marched to last night; or rather, where they have gone to this morning. There's no one on the road Ixtlahuaca-way, is there?"

"None but ourselves, captain," was the answer, as Juan swung himself into the heavy silver-plated saddle, and turned the bay's head up the slope.

Up and up through the oaks stepped the sturdy bay, unmindful of the weight of his rider, until the bald top of the hill is reached, and Juan throws himself on a rock to con the scene below him.

But no sign is there of the long-expected train of troops and pack-mules.

To the westward, half a mile away and below, is the little white wayside inn—a few wayfarers indulging in a quiet breakfast with the inn-folk; then beyond, the stage-road winding wearily for a couple of miles through the "bad

lands," on which points of gray-black lava glittered under the sun; further, a faint cool ripple on the water in the great reservoir of Tepetongo, bedded in waving green corn-fields, mapped out with stone walls.

But no mule-train yet! and his eye wanders on to the westward, past the town, over chine upon chine, hill upon hill, peak upon peak, dying away indefinitely under the spring haze, save where the bald top of the Capulin rises blue-black under its piny garb. Petulantly he turns to follow up the stream to the southward, where far, far away, he just can make out the peak of Xochititlan, raising a sugar-loafed head five thousand feet high out of the fair meads of the broad Lerma valley. "Nothing on the road ahead of us, at any rate," he mutters. But as his eye turns back to the westward, he springs up and forces the bay backward down the slope they had come up. Scarce a mile away was the pack-train, hidden hitherto in a deep gully—two companies of cavalry in front and three companies of infantry behind. "The idiots cannot have a hundred and fifty men! Can they be going to entrap me? Impossible! Well, at all events, I'll change the order of battle." So saying, he mounted, and sent the bay down the hill at a pace that showed he cared for his own neck as little as for the horse's forelegs.

A gallant figure he was—his tall form swinging in the saddle with that peculiar loose and graceful Mexican seat; the ends of his gaudy *sarape* streaming out over the horse's quarters; the broad white felt hat, garnished with silver, flashing in and out of the dark oak-trees; while the silver buttons on his jaguar-skin overalls tinkled a merry tune.

The rattle of his horse's hoofs had roused the men, who were already mounting fast and furious, the gleam of battle in every eye.

"Here, Isidoro," said Medina; "quick to Gabriel, to the east, and tell him to follow down opposite to us; to give the leading companies a volley when he hears the old signal, and then out on them with the *machétes*. Let him leave only five men in the pass to cut off the stragglers. Rafael, go down on foot to José, and tell him, the moment he hears us fire, to set half a dozen men throwing down the wall above the inn, and then to come up himself; and we'll drive the whole train down the hill to the west, and then into the cañon, and have

the mules at the coast in three days, and the plunder safe in the Laurelis. Run! run! Follow me down to the right!"

In five minutes they were ensconced in a thick grove of scrub oak scarce one hundred feet from the road. "Now, men, steady! Remember the old word, 'Death to the Spaniard!' Save all the Indios. We'll let the cavalry get past for Gabriel; and when I give the word, give the infantry the contents of your *trabucos*, and then out on them with the *machétes* and ride them down!"

But many a horse was pawing the ground eagerly, many a man was nervously blowing at his priming, ere the helmets of the first few dragoons rose above the crest.

Half a dozen men riding negligently, chatting and smoking; and then a space of a hundred yards or so to the main body of dragoons, in number some sixty. Then the long line of forty pack-mules; the mules grunting and puffing up the steep—every five with their Indian driver, and each with its little leather saddle-bags, which might contain four thousand dollars in silver, or sixty thousand dollars in gold, who knows? As the dragoons came opposite to the ambushade, the infantry bringing up the rear were just rising the slope a little below where José was posted.

The whole thing was over in thirty seconds. A shrill whistle from Juan, a rain of bullets on both cavalry and infantry. A wild charge, in which the impetus of the horse told more than the *machétes* flickering around their heads. A wild confusion, as the pack-train turns at a canter down the hill, bursting through the already broken file of infantry below. A few gallant rallies against the inevitable, where three or four Spaniards, back to back, try to save themselves, although the day be lost—to no purpose though. The bell-mouthed *trabuco* rains bullets around them, the desperate charge of the horsemen with the *matchéte* stabbing death, the lasso swinging a more certain death for the fugitives. Spain cannot fight against these odds, and after one look over the field, Medina is so certain of the result that, with a few picked men, he is hurrying after the train to stop the mules ere they shake the bags off their backs or founder themselves.

Over rocks, boulders, and ugly country of all sorts dashes the bay, to be brought up plunging and rearing, as Juan heads the train just at the broken wall and forces it into the

fields; and in two minutes the mules are steadied down and walking slowly off toward the gorge. Gabriel is getting together the arms and horses of the soldiers above, and José with half a dozen men is sent down to the little tavern to see that no one plays false there, though there is little fear of that. Another picket is sent on to the Maravatio road, and Juan with the booty rides slowly onward. Down through the green corn-fields, stopping now and again to throw down the stone walls dividing them, winds the train of mules and horsemen, some of the latter staunching their fresh wounds; anon one or two dropping back to help along a comrade who has had rather more than his share of the fight, and who, with that dogged Toltec courage, or possibly want of keen appreciation of pain that more civilized races have, keeps on horseback to the last.

The bottom of the hill is reached, and they strike a trail winding along the stream up into the cañon.

Even with the sun almost at high noon, how dim and forbidding the gorge looks, scarce one hundred feet broad at the bottom, enclosed in rugged rock-walls five hundred feet high which, from below, look as if they met at the top.

In about a mile a little grass lawn opens out, about a hundred yards across, on the right of which a heavy stone wall covers the entrance of the cave. "Ride on, two of you, to the reservoir, and keep watch the Jordanna way, and get the mules unpacked—quick, men!" was the order.

The horses were tied up to the trees around, and a man put at each end of the lawn to prevent the mules from straying, and in ten minutes the sacks were brought into the mouth of the cave, and the counting and sharing began. Thirty-nine mules, with four thousand silver dollars each, and one mule with gold ounces that made the men's eyes sparkle—forty-eight thousand was in those two small bags. It was a good haul—better than they had expected.

One-tenth of the whole booty was laid aside for the widows and orphans; and one-tenth for the general fund for keeping up the guerilla system; one-twentieth for Juan and the two lieutenants; and then the rest was equally divided among the one hundred and twenty men who had taken part in the raid, giving each about a thousand dollars.

The money in gold for the widows and campaign fund was soon repacked on a couple of the stoutest mules, and five

trusty men despatched with it over the mountains to their old treasurer and father-confessor at Laurelis. In a few minutes more appear Gabriel and his band, with the captured arms and horses. The arms are given to those that want them most; the horses and mules are divided up by lot, and a man sent to the tavern to recall José. In the whole affair only one man killed and nine wounded—two badly; while, as Gabriel grimly informs Medina, not a Spaniard escaped.

"Well," said Juan, "we must move from here now. The other *conducta* starts in about three weeks, and we cannot attack it here. All this part will be patrolled. Get to your homes, boys, as quickly and quietly as you can. Mind, no drinking and gambling on the way, and you'll hear from me in two or three weeks. Till then, *adios!*"

And within three hours of the fight, the band had scattered over the little mountain-trails to the southward, except Juan Medina and his first lieutenant, who, with two servants, were taking a light breakfast of black beans and red pepper, the sting of which was relieved by little flat corn cakes, prepared by the old Indian woman who kept the cave.

"We had better be jogging soon, captain," said Gabriel, as they finished; "it won't be long before this is known, and we had better make for the Laurelis."

"I shall be there to-morrow; you can go on," replied Juan. "I must go to Maravatio to-night to see Chucha."

"What! into the lion's mouth!" exclaimed Gabriel, aghast.

"I'll go up the cañon with you, and up to the cross-roads, and then I will strike down to José's, and wait there till night. The Coyote is there, you know; but go to Maravatio to-night I must, and that is all," said the other.

To change Medina's purpose Gabriel knew was impossible; so, mounting, they rode up and out of the mouth of the cañon, where it opens into a broad plain two or three miles long. On reaching it they struck up into the hills to the right, and, after eight to ten miles, separated at the cross-roads.

It was nearly two in the morning when Juan was knocking at Chucha's window in Maravatio, cursing the innumerable patrols of cavalry he had been forced to avoid on his way down from the mountains, and wondering how cross Chucha would be at his lateness.

"Chucha, open—it's me," he whispered.

The windows were flung back suddenly; and Chucha, the picture of agonized despair, dropped on her knees by the bars.

"Fly, Juan! fly!—they are watching for you all over the town; they knew you were coming, and you are surrounded."

"*Caramba!* how did they know that?" asked Juan, in surprise.

"Oh my God! my God! it was Father Hurtado; I confessed it to him. Forgive me, forgive me, Juan! I have killed you."

Juan's answer, whatever it would have been, was cut short by the furious gallop of a horse up the street, followed by the jangling of cavalry scabbards.

For an instant he hesitated. To kill the crying girl and then himself only needed two dagger blows. But was she worth it? Ere he could answer, his plan was changed by recognizing the Coyote sweeping up the street toward him. A whistle brought the horse close to him; and hurling a curse at the fainting girl, he was into the saddle and away into a cross-street at full gallop.

"They've left a picket at all the gates; the best way is to run the gauntlet of the *cuartel* and try the main gate. They won't suppose I shall dare to try that, and I think the Coyote can jump it."

But the three short turns before he got into the main street kept the pursuers uncomfortably close, as he dare not let the horse out in full running for fear of a slip at the corners; but when they are passed, and the gray felt the rein slacken, down the street he raced. The "*Halto ahí! Quién vive? La Guarda!*" had hardly been challenged in quick rough tones from the *cuartel* (barracks) ere Juan was thundering past it, too fast for the volley the guard gave him. That he felt was the critical time—for himself he thought not, but for the horse; and he gave a sigh of relief as the horse neither swerved nor trembled in his gallop when the volley hissed around them.

And now for the gate, the pretty white houses all agleam in the brilliant moonlight changed into low hovels, from which the dogs rush out barking in his track; then the long parapeted causeway, lined with willows, with its low swampy fields of *alfalfa* on each side—and the gate is before him.

No one there!

And he is within fifty yards of it when twenty dragoons form on the outside of it from the roadside. Trapped!

One furious wrench at the heavy Spanish bit brings the gray on to his haunches, and pivoting the horse around on his hind-legs he puts him boldly at the parapet wall to the right. It's a long drop, some eight feet, but will he clear the irrigating ditch? And as the horse lunges outward and downward a sickening sense of uncertainty comes over him. How long it seemed ere they struck! Juan seemed to hear the hurried orders of Torres to the dragoons, to ride out along the causeway and up the river to cut him off, and to hear, too, the "*carambas*" from the troops following him ere the gray crashes into the *alfalfa* below.

A deadened blow, a fearful shudder, a mad reel forward, and the Coyote pulls himself together again, and is away through the deep holding ground of the *alfalfa* patch. If he can get through the river now at some place, Torres and his dragoons have such a long round that they will be too late, and the desultory fire of the troops behind him is not enough to trouble him.

A long staggering jump over an irrigating ditch, and then better going, as he keeps close to the edge of the river while looking for a ford; but the banks are too steep. At last under a willow-tree, three hundred yards below his old fording-place, where he can see a squad of dragoons posted, there is a good place for getting out; and he turns the gray at another deep drop. This time, though, into water. The plunge fairly rends in twain the little stream, and, ere Juan and the gray can see through the dripping water, they are struggling against the opposite bank. He slips off the horse, which crawls out almost as soon as his master, who claws his way up the willow-roots. On to his back and away again, free!

The up-stream squad of dragoons, afraid to cross, or not knowing of his old ford, pepper wildly at him to no purpose. The squad with Colonel Torres are a quarter of a mile away at least, and he pats the horse's shoulder as they sweep out of the low land and on to the firm-holding turf above, free.

Stop! a single horseman is racing up the road to the left to cut him off. Instead of turning short up the bank of the river with the rest of the dragoons, he has held on up the main road. Only Colonel Torres' black can gallop like that.

Yes, the colonel it is!

"Well, we'll try conclusions between the Spanish colonel and the Indio Medina," says Juan, between his teeth

If both keep their line they must come together in about half a mile; and both do—Torres with his pistol out and Juan with his *riata* (lasso) trailing behind him. When scarce twenty yards apart, the colonel bids him stand; Juan, who has his gray well in hand, ducks his head and strides straight at the black. Bang goes the pistol, and as Juan passes under the black's stern, the loop of the *riata* settles over the colonel's shoulders to the waist. A sudden jerk that no horseman can withstand, and Juan is galloping up the road, dragging over its cruel stones a lifeless body. In a hundred yards the end of the *riata* is let go from Juan's saddle-bow, knowing the chase to be too hot to stop and take it off the body; and he settles the Coyote down into a steady gallop.

It is six miles to the bridge across the "little river," where there is probably a cavalry picket on the scout for him; the troopers behind cannot live with the gray even at this pace for three miles; so for them he has no care. He has nothing to do but nurse the gray and think. Think? of what? of the past?—perish the thought! He hates the idea of Chucha unfaithful. Of the present? What cares he, with a good horse between his legs and no more danger than in many of his escapades? Of the future? What future? a future without Chucha! There can be no happy future. And he wanders back again to the window scene in Maravatio. How beautiful she had looked even amid her tears! how he had loved her, and did still! But could she ever be his wife now? The only woman he had ever really cared for, the only one in whom he had confided all; then to be foiled almost at the last moment by that cursed infatuation all women have for confession—little knowing that the very priest laughs at them for it.

"*Halto ahí!*" challenges the picket upon the "little river" bridge, which Juan had altogether forgotten in his reverie, and which now loomed up white and cold against a dark bank of trees only some hundred yards away.

To be only a hundred yards from twenty well armed and mounted dragoons who are on the watch for you would be too close quarters for most men, but room enough for Juan and the Coyote. In three minutes there were as many large irrigating ditches between Juan and the picket, still craning at the first one. Then across the river at a cattle-ford only known to herdsmen and robbers, and into the road a half-mile beyond.

The picket evidently had not seen him come back to the road again, so that he could slacken the gallop down to the Mexican jog-trot, alike so untiring to man and horse.

The low grass fields, with willow-fringed irrigating ditches, give way to more broken ground, covered with locusts, cactus, agave, and weird gray-stemmed "*huele de noche*" trees, redolent with great white bell-flowers. Ahead loomed up a spur of the mountain range, along which he must coast until the cañon is reached. A *coyote* "yap-yapping" across the road, a "tulli-wheeping" flock of curlews over his head, are his only companions.

The chase has died away, and the only point to fear is the bridge at Pomoca, five miles beyond. The game is up now, he feels; he must get over to Laurelis as soon as possible. The *conducta* taken in, and Torres, the best officer of the west, killed, will be enough to make the viceroy hunt him down like a dog. Chucha—to the devil with Chucha! No use for women in his business, except old Mother Josefa in the cave. Best go there, get her and the money on horseback, and over the hills to Gabriel's. Hurtado probably knew of the cave, and the old woman might be killed if found there.

Pomoca at last! Which road shall he take when he gets to the little farm? Across the bridge, and so past Tepetongo? or along the trail to the right?

A gleam of light from the Magdalena on the opposite hill-side shows some early *peons* making ready for the day. How bright the moon was, and how still the night! Twenty yards more and he'll be at the cross-roads. The mares corralled opposite the farm-gate on the threshing-floor, where they have been plodding, a ceaseless round, start up and snort as he appears. "*Quién vive?*" rings out from the bridge road, and Juan jams his spurs into the gray, dashes past its mouth, and up the right-hand trail, to find dragoons springing up on every side of him, unmounted fortunately, all save one who bars the passage of the narrow trail ahead of him. But the dragoon's horse swerves under the gray's thundering charge, and his master drops heavily on to the lava by the footpath, under the thrust of Juan's *machete*. The broken ridges of lava, covered with heavy *nopal* cactus, are all that save Juan from the muskets behind.

"Fifteen miles from the cave, over a villanous trail, *caramba!* how well Torres took his precautions! I suppose I

am free now, at all events, unless the gray lames himself in this cursed *malpais*. They'll give up the chase before the cañon, and I'll have time to get the old woman on to the horse and away, anyhow, before daylight."

"Hold up, Coyote!" They were now skirting along the edge of the stream, sometimes two hundred feet below them and again at their own level, as they rose and fell on the long veinous ridges of lava jutting down black and snake-like from the line of craters rising to the right. The chase is soon hull down, and the gray going steadily and well, jogging, walking, cantering, picking his way from stone to stone, anon swinging out into a gallop when he finds good going, as though he, too, was well aware that the safety of his master depended upon his holding together for many an hour yet.

The *malpais* is past, and the trail leads through damp *shaughs* and over grassy meadows a couple of miles, to the face of the wall before him, out of which rills the cañoned stream, which eighteen hours before saw the band ride from victory.

How long it seemed ago! what was life to him now, that he could not trust Chucha? And back again with fuller force came the old feeling that he was alone—an outlaw, an outcast. True, he might be fighting for his country, but what chance was there? In all the years he had been at it, he had only some ten men he could rely upon. All of the rest had, after making a little money, turned either informer or else had left the band; and now, after the successful *coup* of to-day, perhaps he should find himself with only twenty men, and without Chucha—her he could not marry. No, he must be alone, alone always—curse the thought! The gloomy walls of rock fall asunder, and the little glade, half in dense shadow, half in moonlight, is before him.

He calls old Josefa. No answer, and the handkerchief on the eastern end of the wall tells him she is up the valley. A foreboding comes over him that all is not right, and he rides on past the cave; and half a mile from it Josefa shows herself, and in a whisper tells him that the head of the gorge is patrolled by infantry from the Jordanna, and that he had better turn back. But even as they speak, they hear the clank of horses and steel coming up from below. Caught, caught!

"Take the sheep-trail—quick," says Josefa; "the old horse can make it, and you can get out on the down above, and so away to the northward."

"*Adios*, Josefa! I shall never come back; all my money in the cave is yours if you can save it," said Juan, sadly, as he started up the slender path which led on to the high tableland to the left of the cañon.

An awful trail it was, scarce giving foothold to the horse. And slowly and painfully Juan struggled up it, till he could see the dragoons two hundred feet below, riding slowly up the bottom of the gorge. It was fortunate that their eyes were for things earthly and not ethereal, or Juan would have been discovered. They pass up slowly, and the plateau is at last reached. He mounts and gallops along the edge of the cliff at right angles to the cañon to the northward.

By this time the sun is gleaming on Xochititlan, and in a few minutes more its red disk is heralded on the plateau by brilliant rays, under which Juan, to his horror, catches sight of a wall of infantry cutting him off. Slowly a dark line of blue-coats is closing in on the northeastern side of a triangle, the south and western sides of which are sheer cliff. Another look, and he sees escape is hopeless. No chance of breaking through that line of men alive. After all, what need to?—better to die; and he pulls up the gray, pats the faithful horse for the last time, and awaits his fate, *machete* in hand.

Suddenly an officer hails him to surrender; saying that if he does, he will be well treated. He knows too well what Spanish promises mean. What if he and the Coyote should not die? What if a Spaniard should back Juan de Medina's gray? What tortures were in store for himself if he does not die on the spot? A look at the foe—there are some five hundred of them. A look at the cliff behind—it is sheer. The horse has been his only true friend—Chucha might have been, many might have been, but the horse is his oldest and truest and last! They shall die together!

And turning, Juan Medina rode the gray over the cliff, crashing on to the cruel stones, four hundred feet below.

* * * * *

"He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
And he leaped him out over the wall;
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
Four hundred feet of fall.

"They found him next morning below in the glen,
With never a bone in him whole;
A mass or a prayer, now, good gentlemen,
For such a bold rider's soul."

"JADIS"

BY BARRY PAIN

"What might have been" is the theme of this dainty bit of sentiment, which tells of a chance meeting and a speedy parting in the desolate fen-country. From *The Speaker*.

Over the flat fen-country there were white mists rising. It was already growing dusk, but it was not going to be very dark, this summer night. The weeds had been cut, and drifted down-stream in thick masses. A thin, middle-aged man stood by the lock gates, watching an approaching boat. He was dressed in country clothes, but he had not the air of a countryman; he was pale, and had a look of experience. Save for the regular sound of the sculls, everything was quite still. Save for the man at the lock gates and the solitary occupant of the boat, there was no one in sight. It was a wide, flat, desolate scene.

The boat was rather a heavy tub, and the man who was sculling was tired and out of temper. As a rule, he was thought to be a distinctly brilliant and genial young man; but he wanted to get on to Nunnisham, which was five miles beyond the lock, that night, and he had been delayed by the weeds. The gods had given him extraordinarily good looks and many other good things, enough to keep him genial, unless, as on the present occasion, circumstances tried him severely. At the lock he drew into the bank, and hailed the middle-aged man who still stood watching him.

"Hi! what are the weeds like above the lock?"

"Very bad, sir." The answer was given in a serious, respectful voice.

The young man swore gently to himself. "Is there any place near here where I could put up for the night?"

"There is only a public-house, sir. I am the landlord of it—my name is Hill. I could give you a bedroom, a little rough perhaps, but——"

"Good—a bed and some supper—capital! That is the only bit of luck I've had to-day." As he was speaking, the young man picked up a small knapsack which was lying in the stern of the boat and jumped out. He made the boat fast, and joined the landlord on the towing-path.

"It is this way. You will let me carry that for you, sir."

As they walked along, the brilliant young man—his name was Philip Vince—chatted freely. He was taking a holiday up the river, and was to have joined a friend at Nunnisham that night and then gone on with him the day after. He told the landlord all this, and also surmised that Hill was not a native of the fen-country.

"No, sir," was the answer, "I was valet to Sir Charles Sulmont. You have perhaps heard of him."

Philip had never heard of him, but said that he had.

"When Sir Charles died, he left me a little money, and I married a maid who was then in Lady Sulmont's service. I bought this house, with a little assistance from her ladyship, and settled here. I was very young then, and I have been here eighteen years."

Philip gathered from further talk as they went along that Mrs. Hill was dead, and that she had left one child, Jeanne, a girl of seventeen, who lived with her father. When they reached the inn, Hill showed Philip a bedroom—a large, comfortable room, and began to make some apology about supper. They very rarely had any one staying in the house, and there was nothing left but—here Philip interrupted,

"You would be doing me a kindness if you would let me have supper with you and your daughter. I hate solitude. I mean, if your—if Miss Hill wouldn't object."

"If you really wish it, sir, I should be very pleased; so also, I am sure, would Jeanne." Hill was a born valet; he had the manner; if he had lived out of service for a hundred years, he would have been a valet still. When Hill left him, Philip looked round the room, and congratulated himself. Everything was very neat and clean. The landlord was a capital fellow—a little solemn, perhaps, but still a capital fellow. This was far above the accommodation which he had expected.

Just then a light footfall came up the stairs, and Philip caught a snatch of a French song. The song stopped short just before the footfall passed his door. Philip conjectured that this must be the daughter, and that it had been a French maid that Hill had married—hence the name Jeanne and that snatch of song; also that the daughter had been warned of his arrival, and had gone to put on her prettiest dress. All of these conjectures were quite correct. And yet when Jeanne

entered the sitting-room, a few minutes afterward, and saw Philip for the first time, she was so startled that she showed it slightly. Philip was also a little surprised, for a different reason, and did not show it at all. He had thought of the possibility that Jeanne might be pretty; and she was a beauty—a brunette, childlike in many ways, but with a woman's eyes. Her voice was good, and her first few words showed that she had had some education.

It took her about ten minutes to get from decided shyness to complete confidence. Philip was feeling far too good-tempered to let any one be shy with him; he made Hill and his daughter talk, and he talked freely himself. He liked the simplicity of everything about him; he had grown tired of formalities in London. He liked cold beef and salad, for he was very hungry, and—yes, above all, he liked Jeanne. What on earth were that face and that manner doing in a riverside inn? She was perfect; she did not apologize too much, did not get flurried, did not have red hands, spoke correctly, laughed charmingly—in a word, was bewitching. Really, he was glad that he had been prevented from going on to Nunnisham. Toward the end of supper, he discovered that she was wearing a white dress with forget-me-nots in it.

The table was cleared by a native servant, who seemed all red cheeks and new boots. Hill went off to superintend the business of the inn. Philip was left alone with Jeanne. She told him to smoke, and he was obedient; he also made her tell him other things.

Yes, she had been to school at Nunnisham—rather too good a school for her, she was afraid; but her mother had wished it. Her mother had taught her French and a little music. Music and drawing were the best things, she thought; but she liked *some* books. She owned that it was lonely, at the inn. "I am glad you came," she confessed frankly.

"Jeanne," said Philip, "I heard you humming a line or two of '*Jadis*' before supper, didn't I? I wish you would sing it to me." She agreed at once, crossing the room to a little cottage piano—rather a worn-out instrument, but still a piano. The melody—plaintive, gentle, childish—of Jeanne's sweet voice, and the sadness of the words, with their quaint, pensive refrain, did not miss their effect.

"Je n'attends plus rien ici-bas;
Bonheur perdu ne revient pas,

Et mon cœur ne demande au ciel
Qu'un repos éternel."

He thanked her; he had liked that very much. "Why," he added, "were you startled when you saw me?"

"Because you are a dream come true. I saw your face in a dream last night—as clearly as I see you now. All this time I have been feeling as if I had known you before."

"Really?" he said. He had not quite believed it. "How many things come true! One says things about the shortness of time or the certainty of death so often that they lose all meaning; then when one grows old or lies dying, the platitudes get to have terrible force—they come true."

She was struck by that; she kept her eyes fixed on his, and he went on talking to her. He did not, as the time wore on, always mean quite so much as he said; and she meant much more than she said. That is a common difference between a man and a woman on such occasions. It seemed to her that now for the first time she really lived.

After Jeanne had said good night, Philip had some chat with her father about her.

"I expect that she will be engaged very soon, sir," he said; "a young man called Banks—William Banks—is anxious, and has spoken to me; and she likes him."

"Now, I wonder," thought Philip as he went up-stairs, "why she never even hinted that to me. M'yes, I see."

Next morning after breakfast he went away, taking with him a few forget-me-nots, a pleasant memory, and just the faintest possible feeling of remorse. They all faded.

* * * * *

Jeanne had seemed so quiet and depressed of late that her father, in order to cheer her up, had invited Mr. William Banks to spend the evening.

Mr. Banks was a small shopkeeper in Nunnisham, and considered to be no mean wag by those who knew him. Yet he felt unable to cheer her up. "Supposing we had a bit of a toon, Jenny," he suggested at last.

She was quite docile. She played one thing after another. Suddenly she began "Jadis."

"I don't understand French myself," Mr. Banks remarked, "but the words of a song don't matter." She had never thought much about the words herself before. But now?

" Depuis qu'il a trahi sa foi
Rien n'a plus de charme pour moi."

Her voice faltèred a little, but she sang on to the end of the verse:

" Et mon cœur ne demande au ciel
Qu'un repos éternel."

Yes, the song had "come true." Just there she gave way, and began to cry a little.

A week afterward Mr. Banks announced that his attentions to Miss Hill were at an end.

PÈRE CHAMPAGNE

BY GILBERT PARKER

A certain man falling among thieves is desperately wounded and the past becomes a blank to him. When death is near at hand, memory returns to the wanderer, and he sends his friends on a mission to the woman he has loved but, in the mean time, utterly forgotten. From the National Observer.

"Is it that we stand at the top of the hill, and the end of the travel has come, Pretty Pierre? Why don't you spake?"

"We stand at the top of the hill, and it is the end."

"And Lonely Valley is at our feet and Whitefaced Mountain beyond?"

"One at our feet, and the other beyond, Shon M'Gann."

"It's the sight of my eyes I wish I had in the light of the sun this mornin'. Tell me, what is't you see?"

"I see the trees on the foot-hills, and all the branches shine with frost. There is a path—so wide!—between two groves of pines. On Whitefaced Mountain lies a glacier-field—and all is still."

"The voice of you is far-away-like, Pretty Pierre—it shivers as a white hawk cries. It's the wind, the wind, may be."

"There's not a breath of life from hill or valley."

"But I feel it in my face."

"It is not the breath of life you feel."

"Did you not hear voices coming athwart the wind? Can you see the people at the mines?"

"I have told you what I see."

"You told me of the pine-trees and the glacier and the snow——"

"And that is all, Shon M'Gann."

"But in the valley, in the valley, Pretty Pierre!—where all the miners are!"

"I cannot see them."

"Ah! for love of Heaven, don't tell me that the dark is fallin' on your eyes too."

"No, Shon M'Gann, I am not growing blind."

"Ah! will you not tell me what gives the ache to your words?"

"I see in the valley—snow—snow."

"It's a laugh you have at me in your cheek—whin I'd give years of my ill-spent life, to watch the chimney smoke come

curlin' up slow through the sharp air in the valley there below."

"There is no chimney and there is no smoke in all the valley."

"Before God, if you're a man, you'll put your hand upon my arm and tell me what trouble quakes your speech."

"Shon M'Gann, it is for you to make the sign of the Cross—there, while I put my hand on your shoulder—so!"

"Your hand is heavy, Pretty Pierre."

"This is the sight of the eyes that see, Shon M'Gann. In the valley there is snow; in the snow, of all that was, there is one poppet-head of the mine that was called St. Gabriel—upon the poppet-head there is the figure of a woman."

"Ah!"

"She does not move——"

"She will never move, Pretty Pierre?"

"She will never move, Shon M'Gann."

"The breath of my body gives hurt to me. There is death in the valley, Pretty Pierre?"

"There is death in the valley."

"It was an avalanche—that path you spake of between the pines?"

"And a great storm after."

"Blessed be God that I cannot behold that thing this day! And the woman, Pretty Pierre—the woman aloft?"

"She went to watch for some one coming, and, as she watched, the avalanche came—and she moves not."

"Do we know that woman?"

"Who can tell?"

"What was it you whispered to yourself then, Pretty Pierre?"

"I whispered no word."

"There, don't you hear it, soft and sighin'? Nathalie!"

"*Mon Dieu.* It is not of the world."

"It's facin' the poppet-head, where she stands, I'd be."

"Your face is turned toward her."

"Where is the sun?"

"The sun stands still above her head."

"With the bitter over and the avil past, come rest for her and all that lie there!"

"*Eh, bien,* the game is done."

"If we stay here, we shall die also."

"If we go we die—perhaps."

"Don't spake it. We will go, and we will return when the breath of summer comes from the south."

"It shall be so that we go."

"Hush! Did you not hear——"

"I did not hear. I only see an eagle—and it flies toward Whitefaced Mountain."

And Shon M'Gann and Pretty Pierre turned back from the end of their quest—from a mighty grave behind to a lonely waste before. And though one was snow-blind, and the other knew that on him fell the chiefer weight of a great misfortune, since he must provide food and fire and be as a mother to his comrade, they had courage—without which, men are as the standing straw in an unreaped field in winter, but, having which, become like the hooded pine that keepeth green in frost and hath the bounding blood in all its icy branches.

And whence they came and wherefore was as thus:

A French-Canadian once had lived in Lonely Valley. One day great fortune came to him, because it was given him to discover the mine St. Gabriel. And he said to the woman that loved him, "I will go with mules and much gold, that I have hewn and washed and gathered, to a village in the east where my father and my mother are. They are poor, but I will make them rich; and then I will return to Lonely Valley, and a priest shall come with me, and we will dwell here at Whitefaced Mountain, where men are men and not children." And the woman blessed him, and prayed for him, and let him go.

He travelled far through passes of the mountains, and came at last where new cities lay upon the plains, and where men were full of evil and of lust of gold. And he was free of hand and light of heart; and at a place called Diamond City false friends came about him, and gave him champagne wine to drink, and struck him down and robbed him, leaving him for dead.

And he was found, and his wounds were all healed; all save one, and that was in the brain. Men called him mad.

He wandered through the land, preaching to men to drink no wine and to shun the sight of gold. And they laughed at him, and called him *Père Champagne*.

But one day much gold was found at a place called Reef o' Angel, and jointly with the gold came a plague which

scars the face and rots the body; and Indians died by hundreds and white men by scores; and Père Champagne, of all who were not stricken down, feared nothing and did not flee, but went among the sick and dying, and did those deeds which gold cannot buy, and prayed those prayers which were never sold. And who can count how high the prayers of the feckless go!

When none was found to bury the dead, he gave them place himself beneath the prairie earth—consecrated only by the tears of a fool—and for extreme unction he had but this—“*God be merciful to me, a sinner!*”

And Pretty Pierre the gambler and Shon M’Gann the miner, who travelled westward, came upon this desperate battlefield, and saw how Père Champagne dared the elements of scourge and death; and they paused and labored with him—to save where saving was granted of Heaven, and to bury when the Reaper reaped and would not stay his hand. At last the plague ceased, because winter stretched its wings out swiftly o’er the plains from frigid ranges in the west. And then Père Champagne fell ill again.

And this last great sickness cured his madness; and he remembered whence he had come, and what befell him at Diamond City so many moons ago. And he prayed them, when he knew his time was come, that they would go to Lonely Valley and tell his story to the woman whom he loved; and say that he was going to a strange but pleasant land, and that there he would await her coming. And he begged them that they would go at once, that she might know, and not strain her eyes to blindness and be sick at heart because he came not. And he told them her name, and drew the coverlet up about his head and seemed to sleep; but he waked between the day and dark, and gently cried: “The snow is heavy on the mountain—and—the valley is below. *Gardez! mon Père!* Ah, Nathalie!” And they buried him between the dark and dawn.

Though winds were fierce and travel full of peril, they kept their word and passed along wide steppes of snow until they entered passes of the mountains, and again into the plains; and at last one *poudre* day, when frost was shaking like shreds of faintest silver through the air, Shon M’Gann’s sight fled. But he would not turn back. A promise to a dying man was sacred, and he could follow if he could not lead; and there

was still some pemmican, and there were martens in the woods, and wandering deer that good spirits hunted into the way of the needy; and Pretty Pierre's finger along the gun was sure.

Pretty Pierre did not tell Shon M'Gann that for many days they travelled woods where no sunshine entered, where no trail had ever been nor foot of man had trod—that they had lost their way. Nor did he make his comrade know that one night he sat and played a game of *solitaire* to see if they would ever reach the place called Lonely Valley. Before the cards were dealt he made a sign upon his breast and forehead. Three times he played, and three times he counted victory; and before three suns had come and gone they climbed a hill that perched over Lonely Valley. And of what they saw and their hearts felt, we know.

And when they turned their faces eastward they were as men who go to meet a final and a conquering enemy; but they had kept their honor with the man upon whose grave-tree Shon M'Gann had carved beneath his name these words: "A Brother of Aaron."

Upon a lonely trail they wandered, the spirits of lost travellers hungering in their wake—spirits that mumbled in cedar thickets and whimpered down the flumes of snow. And Pretty Pierre, who knew that evil things are exorcised by mighty conjuring, sang loudly, from a throat made thin by forced fasting, a song with which his mother sought to drive away the devils of dreams that flaunted on his pillow when a child—it was the song of the Scarlet Hunter. And the charm sufficed; for suddenly, of a cheerless morning, they came upon a trapper's hut in the wilderness, where their sufferings ceased, and the sight of Shon M'Gann's eyes came back. When strength returned also, they journeyed to an Indian village, where a priest labored—and him they besought; and when spring came they set forth to Lonely Valley again, that the woman and the smothered dead—if it might chance so—should be put away into peaceful graves. But, thither coming, they only saw a gray and churlish river; and the poppet-head of the mine of St. Gabriel had vanished and she who had knelt thereon was gone into solitudes where even Père Champagne's friends could not follow.

But the priest prayed humbly for the dead and their so swiftly summoned souls.

ETCHINGS : UNREQUITED LOVE

BY IDA J. LANG

In this poetic Etching the Sun is pictured as the too ardent wooer of Mother Earth.

The Sun had ascended high in the heavens. Now, thinking that he had attained a sufficient height to show himself in full splendor, he sent forth a ray, from his burning eye, so full of devotion to Mother Earth that she was almost overwhelmed. Though she expected his attentions, and had donned her brightest colors to meet his smile, his too ardent gaze disconcerted her, and she grew indignant and pale. Anon the clouds, pitying their mistress' distress, gathered to shelter her. But the Sun's wrath poured itself upon them in glances so scathing that they were dissolved into tears, which fell in showers upon the burning face of Mother Earth. Seeing their loyalty to her, she took heart and met the glare of the Sun with womanly scorn. Awed by her resentment, the Sun withdrew behind the mountains of the west.

Ah, then there was rejoicing!

The clouds sent down the dewdrops, to caress the flowers. Mother Earth met the congratulations of her friends the wind, stars, and moon with joy so great that her anger against her suitor had gone when he peeped, next morning, over the eastern hills to see if he were now welcome.

Thus each day he tendered her his affection, until his allotted time of wooing passed and he found himself still a rejected suitor; for Mother Earth thought it unsafe to trust her children, the flowers, to his paternal care. As her life was dedicated to them, she could not leave her place to go to him; but equally impossible was it for her to go farther away from him, for a great attraction held her to this bold suitor.

In departing, after his rejection, the sun frowned so angrily that her children withered and died. For a long time the Earth was desolate, but his anger waned, and, in a year's time, he returned to her with unaltered love and devotion.

Year in and year out has the Sun remained the same assiduous lover; and still Mother Earth is firm in her refusal.

But who knows? Perhaps some day, in a moment of responsive love, she will rush to his impassioned embrace and, with burning soul, be dissolved with him into a delicious unity.

COYOTE-THAT-BITES

BY FRANK B. MILLARD

Tells of the narrow escape of two adventurous children and the good time they had with the weapons of a sleeping Indian. From *The Overland*.

Not every Apache can get his fill of blood before sun-up and his fill of mescal before noon. Yet Coyote-that-Bites had managed to achieve both these delightful ends, and of all the happy savages on the Colorado desert he was the most riotously, tumultuously happy. With what keen delight he had drawn his sharp blade across the throats of José Sanchez and his wife, after he had stolen into their wagon in the gray dawn; and what thrills of joy shot through his breast when he silenced the yells of their two little children with the butt end of their father's own rifle. And then, when he had taken what gold was in the Mexican's bag, what mescal was in his demijohn, and had strapped José's rather loose-fitting cartridge belt about his sun-brown belly, with what fierce pleasure he stole away from the scene of his bloody work, and with the Mexican's rifle on his shoulder had wandered far down the dry arroyo, sipping from the demijohn the stupefying juice of the agave, from time to time, until he felt that he was growing drowsy.

Then he had dragged his uncertain way along, until he had come to the railroad track. He stared stupidly at the bright steel rails, and looked up at the humming wires in an awed sort of way. He would like to lie there behind the rocks, he thought, until some one should come along the track, and then try a shot at him with his newly acquired weapon. The demijohn was growing light and the rifle was growing heavy. Well, it was getting toward noon, and rather warm, even for an Apache, and he would lie down in the shade of the rocks over there and rest.

The humming of the wires is a soothing sound, and no sooner had his head touched the earth than sleep took a mighty hold upon him, and wiped out his realizing sense of joy, as sleep has a way of doing with everybody—that has anything to be joyful for. And so he lay, with the rifle by his side, and his unspeakably hideous face turned up toward the blue that arched the desert.

It was quiet there and restful—no sound save the music of the wires. Stay, there were other sounds; but they came some time after Coyote-that-Bites had thrown himself upon the sand, and gone off to the Land of Nod. They came faintly at first, and mingled with the murmurings of the wires. Surely they were the voices of children.

Had the red beast been awake, he might have imagined that they were the haunting voices of the wee Mexican children whose blood he had so ruthlessly shed that morning. But he heard them not. They were very far from being ghostly voices anyway—those tones that now piped forth so merrily as Dubs and Gay trudged down the line. They were walking in the scoop-out along the road-bed—not on the track, for that was forbidden.

There were other things that were forbidden, too, and one of them was straying so far away from the station. But Dubs was “taking good care” of his three-year-old sister, and in the pride of his six full years he was equal to the care of half a dozen such as Gay.

To give Dubs all due credit, he did not know he was half a mile from home, and he really was going to turn back pretty soon. But the children had found many interesting and beautiful things to claim their attention. First there had been a chase after a young owl that could not fly, and that made its way along in the most haphazard manner imaginable. Then a horned toad had been captured, and Dubs had dragged the disgusted prisoner along by a string, until he had tired of the sport, and had let him go again. Then, always keeping close to the railroad, they had entered a great field of cacti, where Dubs had tried very hard to pick “toonies” without getting the insidious, needle-like spines in his fingers. He was fairly successful, but he would not let the fruit of the cactus go into his sister’s chubby hands until it had been stripped of its dangers by his ready jack-knife.

“’F I on’y had tum matches to build a fire wiv,” sighed Dubs, “I’d burn off vese prickles, jus’ like ve Injuns does.”

“O-o!” came suddenly from under Gay’s sunbonnet. “Wot’s dat?”

“W’y, it’s a jug!” and Dubs left the “toonies” and started toward the pile of rocks where lay the Coyote’s demijohn, and where also lay the Coyote himself.

The two trudged up the little slope, and Dubs grasped the

handle of the demijohn, only to let it drop again and spring back quickly with Gay in his arms. For he had caught sight of the Coyote, and he was smitten with a desire to go home.

But he saw the Indian did not move, and so he suddenly became very brave. He was certainly sound asleep, and no more to be feared than papa, when he lay on his lounge in his midday repose. Then, too, Dubs was quite sure he was "worky Injun," like the Yaquis who shovelled and picked on the railroad, and so his mind became wholly at ease.

The Coyote's cartridge belt, which had been so loosely strapped, had fallen off, and lay by his side. There were a hundred very interesting bits of brass sticking in it, and the children soon had these scattered all about in the sand by the snoring Coyote. In the scramble for her share of the innocent toys, Gay let one of them drop on the Coyote's leg. Perhaps the mescal's influence was on the wane, for a big brown knee was thrust quickly up from the sand, and a big brown hand clutched the ugly knife at the Coyote's side; but the hand fell, and the noble red man snored on.

Dubs tried on the cartridge belt and became an Indian, all but the indispensable knife, and he concluded to borrow that from the sleeper, whose fingers had lost their grip on the buckhorn handle.

"It's bigger'n Mommie's butcher knife, ain't it, Gay?" said Dubs, as he grasped the handle of the devilish-looking blade. "Now you 'tand over vere an' I'll get 'ind vis wock. Ven you tum along, an' I'll jump out an' kill you."

Gay demurred.

"Oh, it's on'y make b'leve. Vese kind o' Injuns don' kill nobody," and he stuck a contemptuous finger toward the innocent Coyote. "It's on'y 'Paches 'at kills, an' vey's none yound here, Mommie says. I'm a 'Pache, so you look out."

It was dubious sport for Gay, and when it came to the killing part she screamed lustily.

"You've woked him up an' 'poiled it all," said Dubs in a tone of accusation. "Now he'll want his knife."

Sure enough the Coyote-that-Bites did shake his brown legs and arms quite vigorously, but the last two big swallows of mescal held him down. So, after turning over, and burying his hatchet-like face in the sand, he lay quiet again.

When he had thus turned over, the rifle was brought into view, which had been concealed by his dirty blanket. Dubs

eyed the weapon with covetous eyes. He could not withstand the temptation of feeling it all over, standing it up on its butt, and trying to shoulder it, but this last feat he could hardly accomplish. Just what it was that kept his fingers off the hammer and trigger, and prevented a sound that would surely have brought the Coyote to his feet with a yell, I am sure I cannot tell; but Dubs played with that fascinating weapon for nearly an hour, while Gay poured sand over the cartridges, hiding nearly all of them from view.

By this time the sun's rays were on the long slant, and the children were very hungry. By this time, too, the Apache was growing restless, for the mescal had nearly lost its grip upon him. A train thundering by, or, much less, a "swift" brushing against his black foot, a spider dropping on his leg, or even a big fly buzzing at his ear—any of these would have set his demon force into play again.

But the children could not wait for such demonstrations as these, though why it did not occur to Dubs that the Coyote's ear needed tickling with a grease-wood twig, the Lord only knows. The wind was up, and the wires were murmuring louder than ever. The wee ones had sported in the black shadows long enough—had played with the fangs of the deadly serpent until they were tired and their stomachs empty. So they set off on a trot for home.

Just as they turned the bend and came in sight of the low roof of the station, a "dust-devil" swept by the rocks where lay the Coyote-that-Bites. He jumped to his feet, grasped his empty sheath, gave a mad whoop, and stared about in feverish rage. There was his knife, half-covered by the sand, and there was his rifle, far from his side. Here was the cartridge belt empty, and all about him in the sand were countless little footprints.

A bewildered look stole over his face, but it passed away when his eye rested on the empty demijohn. The expression that replaced it was one of demoniacal ferocity, and the lust of slaughter lay heavily upon him. But the cartridges—where were they? He saw Gay's mound of sand, and kicking it, gave a grunt of delight to see the brazen capsules that were scattered right and left by his foot.

He picked them all up, grunting over each one. Filling the belt and grasping his rifle, he started off in the direction in which the small footprints led. Like a bloodhound, he

chased along the track. His eyes scanned the plain at every turn, and his breath was hot and strong. But when he turned the big curve, and saw the station, he knew that he was late—too late—and he gave a grunt of disgust, and was off like the wind over a side trail that led toward the sunset.

In the low-roofed station-house the mother crooned to tired little Gay, lying so soft and limp in her arms. She looked out over the desert, saw the sun touching the tips of the solemn giant cacti with purple dots; saw the prickly pear shrubs, holding their grotesque arms above the great sweep of sand that ran down to the low horizon, and felt the inspiration of the scene as she had often felt it before. For the desert has a beauty that is all its own. She knew that other women in the great cities, and in the cool, green valleys, might pity her in that desolate spot, but she felt that she needed not their pity. Dubs came and leaned his head against her arm, where she sat, and little Gay nestled down with a tired sigh. Yes, there was much, she thought, for which to be thankful.

And, in truth, there was.

A HORSE-THIEF

BY OPIE READ

This story shows that the discomforts of jail life may be greatly alleviated by the proper cultivation of a romantic attachment. From *The Arkansaw Traveller*.

The first prisoner that "graced" the new jail at Oak Knob, the county seat of Patterson County, Ark., was a young fellow named Dave Chillew. He was a stranger in this romantic community, which went far toward proving that he had stolen the horse. It was a fact that a roan mare was stolen and that circumstances pointed with a steady finger at the stranger. This being quite sufficient, he was put in jail.

Oak Knob could hardly be classed as a village; indeed it scarcely held the dignity of a cross-road point of importance. Its buildings consisted of a court-house, which also served as a church; a general supply store, a few "residences," and the jail, a strong log pen with an iron-grated door.

Lige Morgan, sheriff and jailer, lived within a few rods of the jail.

Net Morgan, the old man's daughter, returned from school, in an adjoining neighborhood, one evening, and was told that a prisoner had at last been secured for the jail and that it was her duty to feed him. At this appointment to high and important trust the girl jumped up and clapped her hands.

"Oh, that's fine!" she cried.

"Glad you like it," said the old man, "for I don't want nothin' to do with a hoss-thief, and yo' mother 'lows she wouldn't feed one to save his life."

"I don't like a hoss-thief better than you and mother do," she quickly replied, coloring and dropping her hands with a limpness that marked the sickness, if not the death, of her enthusiasm. "I never did have any use for a thief of no sort, much less a hoss-thief, and if I have to take care of him just because you think I like him better than the rest of you do, why, I won't have anything to do with him."

"Come, now, Net, I don't want any of your foolishness. Of course you don't like a hoss-thief any better than the rest of us does, but I want you to take charge of him and feed him until after cou't meets and tries him. If you don't I'll hire Nan Stokes——"

"I'll feed him, pap. What sort of a lookin' man is he?"

"Looks well enough. It's the way he acts that got him into trouble."

"Believe I'll go out there and see who he's like."

"You can't see out there now. It's too dark."

"I can take a light. If he's my prisoner I must do as I please about him."

She took down a spluttering tallow candle and went out to the jail.

"Hello in there," she said, holding up the candle high above her head and attempting to shake the grated door.

There was a rustling of straw and then a voice answered, "Well."

"Come up here so I can see you," said the girl.

He came to the door. "I can't see you very well now," she remarked, trying to throw more light on him and pressing her face against the bars. "I never saw a live hoss-thief, and I want to see what you look like."

"I'm not a horse-thief, miss or madam, I don't know which."

"Miss, if you please. I ain't but fifteen years old, and I don't reckon you see many madams as young as that. I can't see whether you stole that hoss or not."

He laughed with a loud haw-haw, and then said, "Just like a woman."

"Of course, for I am a woman, or the making of one, anyhow. Well, I'll have to wait until to-morrow before I can settle yo' case. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you that I am your keeper, and you can't have anything to eat except what I am a mind to give you."

"I hope, then, that your mind is liberal, miss."

"I don't know about that; I'll have to wait until I get a good look at you."

"Just like a woman again," he said.

"I'm just like a woman all the time," she replied.

"And I never before had cause to wish for good looks," he rejoined.

She went away without saying another word, and the prisoner went back and lay down on his straw bed.

Sunbeams were falling through the bars when he awoke the next morning, and an old rooster and several hens stood pecking at the door-sill.

The chickens moved hastily away and then the girl stood there looking at him.

"Good mornin'."

"Good morning, miss." He went to the door and smiled at her.

"Your mouth ain't so pretty that you need to smile," she said, and then, after studying him closely, added, "I don't know whether you stole that hoss or not. When I look at you this way [moving to the left] I think you did, but when I stand here [moving to the right] I don't believe you did."

"Well, then," he replied, pointing to the right, "you'd better feed me from that side."

"Oh, you are just like a man," she laughed, "but I'm just like a woman, I'm afraid that I'll have to look at you from the worst side."

"If I were a woman I know you would, but as I am not, I thought that you would seek to see me at my best."

"Now, Mr. Smarty, just for that I'll not give you much of a breakfast;" and she didn't either; but she made up for it at noontime.

"I have brought my sewing," she said, "and am going to sit out here in the shade and talk to you. This is the first time I ever had a man where I could talk to him as long as I wanted to."

He looked at her with a pleased expression, and she sat down and began to sew.

"Where are you from?" she asked, looking up.

"Oh, from almost everywhere."

"How long have you been in this country?"

"Only a few days—hadn't been here but a short time until I was arrested."

"That was too bad—that is, if you are innocent."

"And I am, miss—what is your name?"

"Net."

"And I am innocent, Miss Net."

"I don't know, but I reckon court will settle that point when it meets."

"Yes, but I'm afraid it will not be settled in the right way."

"I don't know about that, but I know it will be settled."

"I hope it will soon be settled one way or the other, for I don't like the idea of staying very long in this pen."

"Yes, but when it is settled you may go to a worse one."

"That's consoling, surely; but do you really think they will send me to the penitentiary?"

"What a funny question to ask one! How do I know? But, say, tell me how they come to accuse you."

"Oh, they found me walking along the road and took me up. I had no horse."

"But Zeb Brown says that you passed his house ridin' one, and if that's the case, what did you do with him?"

"I did not pass his house riding a horse."

"But he will swear you did, and will give it as his opinion that you was afraid of bein' caught and sold the horse to somebody."

"Get up here, little girl, and look at me—look into my eyes."

She got up, and after gazing into his eyes, said, "No, you didn't steal a horse. You couldn't do such a thing, and I will believe you no matter who swears against you."

"I could kiss you for those generous words."

"No, you couldn't, for I wouldn't let you. I wouldn't want a man to come kissing me for my words, anyway. If he couldn't kiss me for myself he shouldn't kiss me at all."

"You can safely talk of kissing to a man in jail. How long before court meets?"

"About a week."

"As I am the only man to be tried I suppose they will get through with me in short order."

"I reckon so; and I do hope they won't send you to the penitentiary, for now that I know that you didn't steal that horse I like you ever so much."

"And I like you," he said.

"Oh, of course," she laughed, "for a man always likes anybody that feeds him. But I like you sho' nuff. I think yo' eyes are just lovely."

"You make me blush, little miss; and wouldn't that be a novel sight—a blushing jail-bird?"

She fed him on chicken and hot biscuits, and at evening sang to him. She declared that he was her first and only beau. "But," she always added, "I would hate you if I thought you stole a horse."

One morning she brought him more than the usual amount of food, and when he marvelled at the abundance she said,

"This must do you a day."

"Why so?"

"Because I am going away and won't be back until late this evenin'."

The day was a weary one to the prisoner and he longed for evening. The sun went down, the stars came out. A dog whined, and then a cheerful voice said,

"I'm back again."

"Yes," he cried, "and just in time to give a soft touch to the hardest day I ever spent."

"Oh, what a flatterer you are! but you didn't steal the horse, did you?"

"No, little girl. I'll swear I didn't."

"I know you didn't—I know you just couldn't. I've got news for you."

"What is it?"

"Court meets to-morrow."

"I'm glad, and yet I'm afraid."

"You must not let them see that you are scared. I'll sit by you durin' the trial."

She did sit beside him the next day, and when the judge, after hearing the verdict, sentenced him to the penitentiary for five years, she hung her head and wept.

It was evening and the prisoner was taken back to his cell. A dark night came on, and the wretched man, knowing that on the morrow he should be taken away, lay on his straw bed, wishing that he might die. Hours passed. He was deserted. The dog whined.

"Keep quiet, Bose," some one whispered, and the girl said, softly,

"You thought I had forgot you."

"Yes."

"But I didn't. I wanted the key and had to wait till pap went to sleep. They had a feller to guard you, but I got him drunk. Pap's drunk, too," she giggled.

"What are you going to do?" the prisoner asked, almost breathlessly.

"I'm goin' to let you out, but you must do exactly as I tell you and not say a word. If you try to run away they will catch you to-morrow, but if you follow my plan they never will find you. Come on, now."

She had unlocked the door. "Come 'round this way and

don't say a word. Theré's old Bose dog, but he don't amount to anything. If he had, I'd have got him drunk, too. This way, now."

They went into the woods, where the timber and underbrush were so thick that they had to pick their way along.

"Let's stop here and rest a minute," she said.

"Are we far enough away?"

"Yes, and they can't find us anyway when they're drunk." She giggled again.

"Little woman, you are an angel."

"No, simply a girl that don't want to see an innocent man go to the penitentiary."

"God bless you!" he said.

"And may God bless you!" she replied, "and bless you, and bless you and keep on a-blessin' you till you are safe from the folks about here."

"But what will they do with you, little girl?"

"They won't do anything to me. Pap will scold and rear and pitch, but that will be all."

"But won't the officers of the law put you in jail?"

"It wouldn't be good for one of them if he was to try it. Mother says I'm awful when I get started, and sometimes I reckon I am. We'd better go on now."

"All right, but don't you think you'd better go back?"

"If I was to leave you now you'd wander about in the woods till they find you."

"What time do you suppose it is?" he asked.

"About three o'clock."

"And where will we be if we keep on going?"

"We'll get to the river about daylight."

"And then what?"

"I will show you."

Sometimes coming upon a place less dense, they walked briskly, and then, entering the thick underbrush, they were compelled to pick their way along.

"It's growing lighter," he said.

"Yes," she answered, "and the river isn't very far now."

They trudged on, catching here and there faint glimpses of the coming sunrise.

"Here we are at the river," she cried.

"And now what?" he asked.

She took hold of his hand and, as she led him down a bank, said,

"We'll have to go up stream some ways, but not very far, as I wasn't much wrong. I know these woods even in the dark."

"I don't understand you."

"See!" she pointed to a boat. "You know I was gone a long time the other day. Well, I brought that boat over here, me and an old negro woman."

He uttered an exclamation of surprise, and she giggled.

Still holding his hand, she led him to the boat.

"Row to the other side and float down under the willows," she said.

He stepped in the boat, still holding her hand.

"I must say good-by," he said.

"Good-by," she whispered, still holding his hand and looking back toward her home. A short silence followed.

"Net," he said, "I cannot leave you this way—I cannot deceive you. I did steal that horse."

"Oh!" she sobbed, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Don't, angel, I tell you that I stole the horse."

"I am going with you," she said, and the boat floated out on the current of the sun-blazing stream.

THE CURATE'S DREAM

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET

By means of a pretended visit to Paradise and other abiding-places of saint and sinner, the Abbé Martin is enabled to draw so frightful a picture of the end awaiting his backsliding congregation that, terror-stricken, they flock to the confessional. Translated by Mrs. E. C. Waggener.

The Abbé Martin was curé of Cucugnan. Good as bread and true as gold, he loved his Cucugnanaïis paternally; for him Cucugnan would have been a paradise upon earth, had his Cucugnanaïis given more heed to religion.

But alas! the spiders spun their webs across the door of the confessional; and, on the beautiful Easter Sundays, the Host remained at the bottom of its Saint-Ciboire. The good priest was broken-hearted, and always asked from God the boon of not dying before he had succeeded in bringing his scattered flock to the fold again. Well, you will see that God heard him.

One Sunday at the close of the Gospel, M. Martin mounted to his pulpit.

"My brothers," said he, "my brothers, believe me when I tell you, the other night I found myself, I, a miserable sinner, at the gate of Paradise. I knocked, and Saint Peter opened to me.

"'Tiens! is it you, my brave M. Martin? What will you have?' he said to me. 'What can I do for your service?'

"'Beautiful Saint Peter, you are keeper of the Great Book, also of the key of the gate. Perhaps you would tell me, if I am not too inquisitive, how many Cucugnanaïis you have in Paradise?'

"'Certainly, M. Martin, I can refuse you nothing; but seat yourself, seat yourself, till I look into it and see.' And Saint Peter took up his Great Book, opened it, put on his spectacles, and began to run down the page.

"'Cucugnan, did you say? Cu-cu-Cucugnan—ah, here we are! But, my good M. Martin, the page is all white—not a single soul! No more of Cucugnanaïis in Paradise than of fishbones in turkey!'

"'How? Nobody from Cucugnan here—nobody? It is impossible! Look again, Saint Peter, look again!'

"'Nobody, holy man; however, look for yourself if you think that I am jesting.'

"I looked—I stamped my feet—I wrung my hands—I cried '*Miséricorde ! miséricorde !*'"

"'Believe me, M. Martin,' Saint Peter said to me, 'believe me, it is wrong to worry yourself thus. It will give you a stroke of apoplexy. It is not your fault, after all. But your Cucugnans, to a certainty, must be making their little quarantine in Purgatory.'

"'Then allow me, Saint Peter, for charity's sake, allow me at least to see and console them.'

"'Willingly, my friend; but stay; put on these sandals before you go. The roads are not good ones. *Voilà !* that is better. Now walk straight ahead of you. Do you see below there, at the end, a turning? Upon the right of it you will find a door—a silver door—all constellated and studded with black crosses; knock, and they will open to you. *Adessias*, M. Martin; *adessias !* Keep your health and cheerfulness.'

"And I walked and walked—what a struggle! I shudder when thinking of it—that little path all filled with briars, glowing with carbuncles and writhing with hissing serpents, that led directly to the silver door!

"Pan-pan. 'Who knocks?' a voice cried to me—a voice hoarse and doleful.

"'The curé from Cucugnan.'

"'From where?'

"'From Cucugnan.'

"'Ah! enter!'

"I entered. Before me a tall, beautiful angel, with wings as black as night, a robe resplendent as the day, and a diamond key hanging from his girdle, was writing—scratch—scratch—in a monstrous book—a book in every way bigger than that of Saint Peter.

"'Well,' he said to me, 'well, what is it that has brought you here? What is it that you want?'

"'Beautiful angel of God,' I answered him, 'only to know—I am very curious, perhaps—if you have here the Cucugnans?'

"'The—the——'

"'The Cucugnans—the people from Cucugnan. It is I who am their prior.'

"'Ah, the Abbé Martin, is it not?'

"'At your service, M. Angel.'

"'Cucugnan, you say, Cucugnan,' and the angel, as Saint

Peter had done before him, spread open the leaves of his book, moistened his fingers in order that they should turn the better, and hastily ran through the names.

"‘M. Martin,’ said he at last, uttering a deep sigh, ‘we have not in Purgatory a soul from Cucugnan!’

"‘Jesus! Marie! Joseph! Nobody from Cucugnan in Purgatory—nobody! Where are they, then? *O grand Dieu!* Where are they? Where are they?’

"‘Eh, holy man, where are they? They are in Paradise. Where else do you wish they should be?’

"‘But I have come from Paradise.’

"‘You—from Paradise? *Eh bien?*’

"‘*Eh bien*, they were not there! Ah, Good Mother of Angels, where are they?—wh——’

"‘Well, M. le Curé—if they are neither in Paradise nor Purgatory? There is but one place they can be. They are——’

"‘Holy Cross—Jesus—Son of David! Can it be possible? And how can I go to Paradise if my Cucugnans are not there? How can I—how can I go?’

"‘Listen to me, M. Martin,’ said the angel, checking me; ‘before you retrace your steps you need to be certain of this. See, therefore, with your own eyes; follow the path to the left there, and run, if you know how to run. At the end of it is a portal; through it you can look upon all. God assist you!’ And the angel closed the door upon me.

"The road before me was a broad one, but paved and scorching with glowing embers. I staggered as if I were drunk and stumbled at every step. I was all in a perspiration; every hair on my body had its separate drop of sweat, and I strangled and panted with thirst. But, *ma foi!* thanks to the sandals which Saint Peter had given me, I was able to run, without blistering my feet.

"At last I saw upon my left hand a door; no, a portal, an enormous portal, red and yawning like the mouth of a great furnace. Ah, my children, what a spectacle! There they asked not my name; there was no register, no keeper; they entered there by a wide and open door, as on Sunday you enter the cabaret. I sweat still, with great drops of sweat, although I was chilled and shivering. My hair stood erect upon my head, and I smelled the burning, roasting flesh—

something like the odor that spreads itself in our Cucugnan when Eloy, the Maréchal, burns the hoof of an old ass for the shoer. I lost my breath in that atmosphere, stinking and stifling, and heard a horrible clamor of groanings, howlings and cursings.

"*Eh bien*, enter thou,' said a horned devil to me, prodding me with his pitchfork. 'Enter, I say; why dost thou not enter?'

"'I—I enter not; I am a friend of God!'

"'A friend of—eh? Then what comest thou here for?'

"'I come—ah, but—I can scarcely hold myself on my legs—I come—from a distance—humbly—to ask you—if by a stroke of chance—you should have here—any one—from—from Cucugnan?'

"'Any one from Cu——! *Feu de Dieu!* but thou playest the stupid, thou, as if thou didst not know that all of Cucugnan is here! Tiens! ugly crow, open thine eyes and thou wilt see how we arrange them here—these famous Cucugnais!'

"And there, in the midst of a whirlwind of flame, I saw the long Coq-Galine—you all remember him, my children—Coq-Galine, who got drunk so often, and so often shook the fleas from his poor Clairon; and Catarinet, that little beggar, with her nose in the air, who slept all alone in the barn—you remember her, too, my *drôles*—but pass on, pass on, I have said enough; and Pascal, Doight de Poix, he who made his oil with the olives of M. Julien—I saw him, too; and Babet, the gleaner, who in gleaning swelled his sheaves with handfuls from the common stack; Master Grapasi, who oiled so well the wheels of his barrow; Dauphine, who sold so dear the water from her well; and the Tortillard, who, when he encountered me upon the road carrying the blessed bread, kept his way, his pipe in his mouth, his cap on his head, as if he had encountered a dog; and Coulan with his Zette; and Jacques, and Pierre and Toni——"

Moved and white with fear, the audience groaned aloud in thus beholding in that opened hell a father, a mother, a grandmother, or a sister!

"You know well, my brothers," continued the good Abbé Martin, "you know well that this cannot go on. I have the

charge of your souls, and I wish, yes, I intend to save you from the abyss into which you are rolling headforemost. To-morrow I begin the work, not later than to-morrow; and the work will not flag.

"Behold how I shall take it, in order that it shall be done with system and in thoroughness. We shall go rank by rank, as at Jonquières when they dance. To-morrow, Monday, I shall confess the aged men and women of the village; Tuesday, the children—I shall soon finish; Wednesday, the youths and maidens—this will doubtless take me longer; Thursday, the men—we shall cut it short; Friday, the women—'no stories!' I shall say to them, 'No stories!' Saturday, the miller—it is not too much of a furnace for him all alone; and Sunday, if we have finished, we should be very happy. When the grain is ripe, my children, it should be cut; when the wine is drawn, it should be drunk. Behold, enough of dirty linen—the question is to wash it, and to wash it well!

"To the mercy of God I commend you. Amen!"

That which was said was done, and done with lye. Since that memorable Sunday the virtues of Cucugnan have breathed themselves for ten leagues around. And the good pastor, M. Martin, happy and full of cheerfulness, dreamed the other night that, followed by all his flock, in resplendent procession, he climbed the golden road that led to the city of God in the midst of lighted tapers, a cloud of perfumed incense and children of the choir chanting the "Te Deum."

THE LIFTED VEIL

BY GEORGE ELIOT

Famous Stories Series

To many of the readers of George Eliot's works, *The Lifted Veil* will present itself in the nature of a surprise. Appearing anonymously, it foreshadowed, with its mystery and occult suggestion, the prominence that clairvoyance and hypnotism would attain as factors in the literary work of a later generation. From *Blackwood's Magazine*.

The time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of *angina pectoris*; and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true prevision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on the 20th of September, 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope.

Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one will answer my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench—she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases; my lamp goes out with a horrible stench; I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown; the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it, I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom

of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber-window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them forever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness; but I am passing on and on through the darkness; my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward.

* * * * *

Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead; it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn toward you with moist, timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy, unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgments, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by and by be still—*ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*; * the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honor to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and may consent to bury them.

That is a trivial schoolboy text; why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honor. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story

* Inscription on Swift's tombstone.

of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after-years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children; I had all their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow; and I had a tender mother. Even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee—her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill. I rode my little white pony, with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back.

Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before; for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember, still, the mingled trepidation and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the grooms' voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the courtyard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard—for my father's house lay near a county town where there were large barracks—made me sob and tremble; and yet, when they were gone past, I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me; though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five-and-forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence; one of those people who are always like themselves

from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits.

I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times; a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connections, of course; my father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But, intrinsically, he had slight esteem for "those dead but sceptred spirits;" having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's *Æschylus*, and dipping into Francis' *Horace*. To this negative view he added a positive one, derived from a recent connection with mining speculations; namely, that a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr. Letherall had said so very decidedly.

Mr. Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, suspicious manner—then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows—

"The deficiency is there, sir—there; and here," he added, touching the upper sides of my head, "here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep."

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred—hatred of this big, spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

I am not aware how much Mr. Letherall had to do with the system afterward adopted toward me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages were the appliances by which the defects of my organization were to be remedied. I was very stupid about

machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoölogy and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and human emotions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus; and would, doubtless, have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy.

I read Plutarch, and Shakespeare, and Don Quixote on the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that "an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran down-hill." I had no desire to be this improved man; I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling among the pebbles, and bathing the bright green water-plants, by the hour together. I did not want to know *why* it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development.

When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of nature in all her awful loveliness.

You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song, and *believes* in the listening ear and answering soul to which his song will be floated sooner or later. But the poet's sensibility without his voice—the poet's sensibility that finds no vent

but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye—this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's fellow-men.

My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat, at evening, toward the centre of the lake; it seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain-tops, and the wide blue water surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did—lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain-top after the other, as if the prophet's chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance, and was allowed no late wanderings.

This disposition, of mine, was not favorable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths, of my own age, who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made *one* such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles Meunier; his real surname—an English one, for he was of English extraction—having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange! that with my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant, hating inquiry and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn toward a youth whose strongest passion was science. But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical: it came from community of feeling.

Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese *gamins*, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and, stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances toward him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and, in Charles' rare holidays, we went up the

Salève together or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened, dreamily, to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly, in my thought, with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half-absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds, when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship, because of its connection with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a severe illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of convalescence, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days, my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa,

"When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbors, the Filmores, are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague——"

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word *Prague*, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me; a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long-past century arrested in its course—unrefreshed for ages by the dews of night or the rushing rain-cloud; scorching the dusty, weary, time-eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on, in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated kings in their regal gold-inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought,

who are the fathers of ancient faded children, in those tanned, time-fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual midday, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again; one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again, I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream—this wonderfully distinct vision—minute in its distinctness down to a patch of rainbow light on the pavement, transmitted through a colored lamp in the shape of a star—of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague; it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely remembered historical associations—ill-defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking-in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr. Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room.

No, it was not a dream; was it—the thought was full of tremulous exultation—was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward

flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization—given a firmer tension to my nerves—carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects—in works of fiction, at least. Nay, in genuine biographies I had read of the subtilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city; I believed—I hoped it was a picture that my newly liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colors snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place—Venice, for example, which was far more familiar to my imagination than Prague; perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thought on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only coloring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labor after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity, such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a reawakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in drives and, gradually, lengthening walks as my strength increased; and, one evening, he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical box and other purchases rigorously demanded

of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone, just where it leaves the dark blue lake, but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone; there were two persons with him. Strange! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open; but I saw my father, and, at his right hand, our neighbor Mrs. Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a commonplace middle-aged woman, in silk and cashmere; but the lady, on the left of my father, was not more than twenty, a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair, arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small-featured, thin-lipped face they crowned. But the face had not a girlish expression; the features were sharp, the pale gray eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale green dress, and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her pale blond hair, made me think of a Water-Nixie—for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal-eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a birth from some cold sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said—

But, while the last word was in my ears, the group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese folding-screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had manifested itself again. But *was* it a power? Might it not rather be a disease—a sort of intermittent delirium, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense

of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

"*Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien ?*" he said anxiously.

"I'm tired of waiting, Pierre," I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could, like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine; "I'm afraid something has happened to my father—he's usually so punctual. Run to the Hôtel des Bergues and see if he is there."

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing "*Bien, monsieur,*" and I felt the better for this scene of simple, waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the *salon*, and opened a case of eau-de-Cologne, took out a bottle, went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead, and under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the scent because I had procured it by slow details of labor, and by no strange sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the *salon*, but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding-screen was my father, with Mrs. Filmore on his right hand, and on his left—the slim blond-haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said—

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying, with my head low, on the sofa—Pierre and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived, my father left the room, and presently returned, saying—

"I've been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to-day."

Presently he said, "That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs. Filmore's orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a neighbor when we go home—perhaps for a near relation; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for

her in every way as if she were his daughter. It had not occurred to me, that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores."

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not for the world have told him the reason. I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence—I think the very next day—I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact. The vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance—Mrs. Filmore, for example—would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill-played musical instrument or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this unpleasant sensibility was fitful, and left me moments of rest, when the souls of my companions were once more shut out from me, and I felt a relief such as silence brings to wearied nerves.

I might have believed this importunate insight to be merely a diseased activity of the imagination, but that my prevision, of incalculable words and actions, proved it to have a fixed relation to the mental process in other minds. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me; when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious mem-

ories, and indolent make-shift thoughts, on which human words and deeds lie like leaflets covering a fermenting heap.

At Basle we were joined by my brother Alfred, now a handsome, self-confident, man of six-and-twenty—a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self. I believe I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half-ghostly beauty; for the portrait-painters, who are thick as weeds at Geneva, had often asked me to sit to them, and I had been the model of a dying minstrel in a fancy picture. But I thoroughly disliked my own physique, and nothing but the belief that it was a condition of poetic genius would have reconciled me to it. That brief hope was quite fled, and I now saw in my face nothing but the stamp of a morbid organization, framed for passive suffering—too feeble for the sublime resistance of poetic production.

Alfred, from whom I had been almost constantly separated, and who, in his present stage of character and appearance, came before me as a perfect stranger, was bent on being extremely friendly and brother-like to me. He had the superficial kindness of a good-humored, self-satisfied nature, that fears no rivalry, and has encountered no contrarities. I am not sure that my disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy toward him, even if our desires had not clashed, and if I had been in the healthy human condition which admits of generous confidence and charitable construction. There must always have been an antipathy between our natures. As it was, he became in a few weeks an object of intense hatred to me; and when he entered the room, still more when he spoke, it was as if a sensation of grating metal had set my teeth on edge. My diseased consciousness was more intensely and continually occupied with his thoughts and emotions, than with those of any other person who came in my way. I was perpetually exasperated with the petty promptings of his conceit and his love of patronage, with his self-complacent belief in Bertha Grant's passion for him, with his half-pitying contempt for me—seen not in the ordinary indications of intonation, phrase or slight action, which an acute and suspicious mind is on the watch for, but in all their naked, skinless complication.

For we were rivals, and our desires clashed, though he was not aware of it. I have said nothing, yet, of the effect Bertha Grant produced in me on a nearer acquaintance. That effect

was chiefly determined by the fact that she made the only exception, among all the human beings about me, to my unhappy gift of insight. About Bertha I was always in a state of uncertainty; I could watch the expression of her face, and speculate on its meaning; I could ask for her opinion with the real interest of ignorance; I could listen for her words and watch for her smile with hope and fear; she had for me the fascination of an unravelled destiny. I say it was this fact that chiefly determined the strong effect she produced on me; for, in the abstract, no womanly character could seem to have less affinity for that of a shrinking, romantic, passionate youth than Bertha's. She was keen, sarcastic, unimaginative, prematurely cynical—remaining critical and unmoved in the most impressive scenes—inclined to dissect all my favorite poems, and especially contemptuous toward the German lyrics which were my pet literature at that time.

To this moment I am unable to define my feeling toward her; it was not ordinary boyish admiration, for she was the very opposite, even to the color of her hair, of the ideal woman who still remained to me the type of loveliness; and she was without that enthusiasm for the great and good, which, even at the moment of her strongest dominion over me, I should have declared to be the highest element of character.

But there is no tyranny more complete than that which a self-centred negative nature exercises over a morbidly sensitive nature, perpetually craving sympathy and support. The most independent people feel the effect of a man's silence in heightening their value for his opinion—feel an additional triumph in conquering the reverence of a critic habitually captious and satirical; no wonder, then, that an enthusiastic, self-distrusting youth should watch and wait before the closed secret of a sarcastic woman's face, as if it were the shrine of the doubtfully benignant deity who ruled his destiny. For a young enthusiast is unable to imagine the total negation in another mind of the emotions which are stirring his own; they may be feeble, latent, inactive, he thinks, but they are there—they may be called forth. Sometimes, in moments of happy hallucination, he believes they may be there in all the greater strength, because he sees no outward sign of them. And this effect, as I have intimated, was heightened to its utmost intensity in me, because Bertha was the only being who remained for me in the mysterious seclusion of soul that renders such youthful delusion possible.

Doubtless there was another sort of fascination at work—that subtle physical attraction which delights in cheating our psychological predictions, and in compelling the men who paint sylphs to fall in love with some *bonne et brave femme*, heavy-heeled and freckled.

Bertha's behavior toward me was such as to encourage all my illusions, to heighten my boyish passion, and make me more and more dependent on her smiles. Looking back, with my present wretched knowledge, I conclude that her vanity and love of power were intensely gratified by the belief that I had fainted, on first seeing her, purely from the strong impression her person had produced on me. The most prosaic woman likes to believe herself the object of a violent, a poetic passion; and, without a grain of romance in her, Bertha had that spirit of intrigue which gave piquancy to the idea, that the brother of the man she meant to marry was dying with love and jealousy for her sake. That she meant to marry my brother, was what, at that time, I did not believe; for though he was assiduous in his attentions to her, and I knew well enough that both he and my father had made up their minds to this result, there was not yet an understood engagement. There had been no explicit declaration; and Bertha habitually, while she flirted with my brother, and accepted his homage in a way that implied to him a thorough recognition of its intention, made me believe, by the subtlest looks and phrases—feminine nothings which could never be quoted against her—that he was really the object of her secret ridicule; that she thought him, as I did, a coxcomb, whom she would have pleasure in disappointing.

Me she openly petted in my brother's presence, as if I were too young and sickly ever to be thought of as a lover; and that was the view he took of me. But I believe she must, inwardly, have delighted in the tremors into which she threw me by the coaxing way in which she patted my curls, while she laughed at my quotations. Such caresses were always given in the presence of our friends; for when we were alone together, she affected a much greater distance toward me, and now and then took the opportunity, by words or slight actions, to stimulate my foolish timid hope that she really preferred me. And why should she not follow her inclination? I was not in so advantageous a position as my brother, but I had fortune, I was not a year

younger than she was, and she was an heiress, who would soon be of age to decide for herself.

The fluctuations of hope and fear, confined to this one channel, made each day in her presence a delicious torment. There was one deliberate act of hers which especially helped to intoxicate me. When we were at Vienna her twentieth birthday occurred, and, as she was very fond of ornaments, we all took the opportunity of the splendid jewellers' shops, in that Teutonic Paris, to purchase her a birthday present of jewelry. Mine, naturally, was the least expensive; it was an opal ring—the opal was my favorite stone, because it seems to blush and turn pale as if it had a soul. I told Bertha so when I gave it her, and said that it was an emblem of the poetic nature, changing with the changing light of heaven and of woman's eyes.

In the evening she appeared elegantly dressed, and wearing conspicuously all the birthday presents except mine. I looked eagerly at her fingers, but saw no opal. I had no opportunity of noticing this to her during the evening; but the next day, when I found her seated near the window alone, after breakfast, I said, "You scorn to wear my poor opal. I should have remembered that you despised poetic natures, and should have given you coral, or turquoise, or some other opaque unresponsive stone." "Do I despise it?" she answered, taking hold of a delicate gold chain which she always wore round her neck, and drawing out the end from her bosom with my ring hanging to it; "it hurts me a little, I can tell you," she said, with her usual dubious smile, "to wear it in that secret place; and since your poetical nature is so stupid as to prefer a more public position, I shall not endure the pain any longer."

She took off the ring from the chain and put it on her finger, smiling still, while the blood rushed to my cheeks, and I could not trust myself to say a word of entreaty that she would keep the ring where it was before.

I was completely fooled by this, and for two days shut myself up in my own room, whenever Bertha was absent, that I might intoxicate myself afresh with the thought of this scene and all it implied.

I should mention that during these two months—which seemed a long life to me from the novelty and intensity of the pleasures and pains I underwent—my diseased participa-

tion in other people's consciousness continued to torment me; now it was my father, and now my brother, now Mrs. Filmore or her husband and now our German courier, whose stream of thought rushed upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of, though it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course. It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sounds where others find perfect stillness. The weariness and disgust of this involuntary intrusion into other souls was counteracted only by my ignorance of Bertha, and my growing passion for her; a passion enormously stimulated, if not produced, by that ignorance. She was my oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge.

I had never allowed my diseased condition to betray itself, or to drive me into any unusual speech or action, except once, when, in a moment of peculiar bitterness against my brother, I had forestalled some words which I knew he was going to utter—a clever observation, which he had prepared beforehand. He had occasionally a slightly affected hesitation in his speech; and, when he paused an instant after the second word, my impatience and jealousy impelled me to continue the speech for him, as if it were something we had both learned by rote. He colored and looked astonished, as well as annoyed; and the words had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt a shock of alarm lest such an anticipation of words—very far from being words, of course, easy to divine—should have betrayed me as an exceptional being, a sort of quiet energumen, whom every one, Bertha above all, would shudder at and avoid. But I magnified, as usual, the impression any word or deed of mine could produce on others; for no one gave any sign of having noticed my interruption as more than a rudeness, to be forgiven me on the score of my feeble, nervous condition.

While this superadded consciousness of the actual was almost constant with me, I had never had a recurrence of that distinct prevision which I have described in relation to my first interview with Bertha; and I was waiting, with eager curiosity, to know whether or not my vision of Prague would prove to have been an instance of the same kind.

A few days after the incident of the opal ring, we were paying one of our frequent visits to the Lichtenberg Palace. I could never look at many pictures in succession; for pictures,

when they are at all powerful, affect me so strongly that one or two exhaust all my capability of contemplation. This morning I had been looking at Giorgione's picture of the cruel-eyed woman, said to be a likeness of Lucrezia Borgia. I had stood long alone before it, fascinated by the terrible reality of that cunning, relentless face, till I felt a strange poisoned sensation, as if I had long been inhaling a fatal odor, and was just beginning to be conscious of its effects. Perhaps, even then, I should not have moved away, if the rest of the party had not returned to this room and announced that they were going to the Belvedere Gallery to settle a bet, which had arisen between my brother and Mr. Filmore, about a portrait. I followed them dreamily, and was hardly alive to what occurred till they had all gone up to the gallery, leaving me below; for I refused to come within sight of another picture that day.

I made my way to the Grand Terrace, since it was agreed that we should saunter in the gardens when the dispute had been decided. I had been sitting here a short space, vaguely conscious of trim gardens, with a city and green hills in the distance, when, wishing to avoid the proximity of the sentinel, I rose and walked down the broad stone steps, intending to seat myself farther on in the gardens. Just as I reached the gravel walk I felt an arm slipped within mine, and a light hand gently pressing my wrist. In the same instant a strange intoxicating numbness passed over me, like the continuance or climax of the sensation I was still feeling from the gaze of Lucrezia Borgia. The gardens, the summer sky, the consciousness of Bertha's arm being within mine, all vanished, and I seemed to be suddenly in darkness, out of which there gradually broke a dim firelight, and I felt myself sitting in my father's leather chair in the library at home. I knew the fireplace—the dogs for the wood fire—the black marble chimney-piece with the white marble medallion of the dying Cleopatra in the centre. Intense and hopeless misery was pressing on my soul; the light became stronger, for Bertha was entering with a candle in her hand—Bertha, my wife—with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball-dress; every hateful thought within her present to me.—“Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?”

It was a moment of hell. I saw into her pitiless soul—saw its barren worldliness, its scorching hate—and felt it clothe

me round like an air I was obliged to breathe. She came with her candle and stood over me with a bitter smile of contempt; I saw the great emerald brooch on her bosom, a studded serpent with diamond eyes. I shuddered—I despised this woman with the barren soul and mean thoughts; but I felt helpless before her, as if she clutched my bleeding heart, and would clutch it till the last drop of life-blood ebbed away. She was my wife, and we hated each other. Gradually the hearth, the dim library, the candle-light disappeared—seemed to melt away into a background of light, the green serpent with the diamond eyes remaining a dark image on the retina.

Then I had a sense of my eyelids quivering, and the living daylight broke in upon me; I saw gardens, and heard voices; I was seated on the steps of the Belvedere Terrace, and my friends were round me.

The condition of mind into which I was thrown by this hideous vision made me ill for several days, and prolonged our stay in Vienna. I shuddered with horror as the scene recurred to me; and it recurred constantly, with all its *minutiæ* as if they had been burnt into my memory; and yet, such is the madness of the human heart, under the influence of its immediate desires, I felt a wild hell-braving joy that Bertha was to be mine; for the fulfilment of my former prevision, concerning her first appearance before me, left me little hope that this last hideous glimpse of the future was the mere diseased play of my own mind, and had no relation to external realities. One thing alone I looked toward as a possible means of casting doubt on my terrible conviction—the discovery that my vision of Prague had been false—and Prague was the next city on our route.

Meanwhile, I was no sooner in Bertha's society again, than I was as completely under her sway as before. What if I saw into the heart of Bertha, the matured woman—Bertha, my wife? Bertha, the *girl*, was a fascinating secret to me still. I trembled under her touch; I felt the witchery of her presence; I yearned to be assured of her love. The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst. Nay, I was just as jealous of my brother as before—just as much irritated by his small patronizing ways; for my pride, my diseased sensibility were there as they had always been, and winced, as inevitably, under every offence as my eye winced from an in-

truding mote. The future, even when brought within the compass of feeling by a vision that made me shudder, had still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion—of my love for Bertha, of my dislike and jealousy toward my brother.

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood, because it is only to take effect at a distant day; then rush on to snatch the cup, their souls thirst after, with an impulse not the less savage because there is a shadow beside them forevermore. There is no short cut, no tram-road, to wisdom; after all the centuries of invention, the soul's path lies through the thorny wilderness which must be still trodden in solitude, with bleeding feet, with sobs for help, as it was trodden by them of old time.

My mind speculated eagerly on the means by which I should become my brother's successful rival, for I was still too timid, in my ignorance of Bertha's actual feeling, to venture on any step that would urge from her an avowal of it. I thought I should gain confidence, even for this, if my vision of Prague proved to have been veracious; and yet, the horror of that certitude! Behind the slim girl Bertha, whose words and looks I watched for, whose touch was bliss, there stood continually that Bertha with the fuller form, the harder eyes, the more rigid mouth—with the barren, selfish soul laid bare; no longer a fascinating secret, but a measured fact, urging itself perpetually on my unwilling sight.

Are you unable to give me your sympathy—you who read this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas—pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved.

In after-days I thought, with bitter regret, that if I had foreseen something more or something different—if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if, even along with it, I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's

face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling toward him; pride and hatred would surely have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. But this is one of the vain thoughts with which we men flatter ourselves. We try to believe that the egoism within us would have easily been melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human pity, and hindered them from submerging our hard indifference to the sensations and emotions of our fellow. Our tenderness and self-renunciation seem strong when our egoism has had its day—when, after our mean striving for a triumph that is to be another's loss, the triumph comes suddenly, and we shudder at it, because it is held out by the chill hand of Death.

Our arrival in Prague happened at night, and I was glad of this, for it seemed like a deferring of a terribly decisive moment, to be in the city for hours without seeing it. As we were not to remain long in Prague, but to go on speedily to Dresden, it was proposed that we should drive out the next morning and take a general view of the place, as well as visit some of its specially interesting spots, before the heat became oppressive—for we were in August, and the season was hot and dry. But it happened that the ladies were rather late at their morning toilet, and, to my father's politely repressed but perceptible annoyance, we were not in the carriage till the morning was far advanced.

I thought with a sense of relief, as we entered the Jews' quarter, where we were to visit the old synagogue, that we should be kept in this flat, shut-up part of the city until we should all be too tired and too warm to go farther, and so we should return without seeing more than the streets through which we had already passed. That would give me another day's suspense—suspense, the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope. But, as I stood under the blackened, groined arches of that old synagogue, made dimly visible by the seven thin candles in the sacred lamp, while our Jewish cicerone reached down the Book of the Law, and read to us in its ancient tongue—I felt a shuddering impression that this strange building, with its shrunken lights, this surviving withered remnant of mediæval Judaism, was of a piece with my vision. Those darkened dusty Christian saints,

with their loftier arches and their larger candles, needed the consolatory scorn with which they might point to a more shrivelled death-in-life than their own.

As I expected, when we left the Jews' quarter, the elders of our party wished to return to the hotel. But now, instead of rejoicing in this, as I had done beforehand, I felt a sudden overpowering impulse to go on at once to the bridge, and put an end to the suspense I had been wishing to protract.

I declared, with unusual decision, that I would get out of the carriage and walk on alone; they might return without me. My father, thinking this merely a sample of my usual "poetic nonsense," objected that I should only do myself harm by walking in the heat; but when I persisted, he said angrily that I might follow my own absurd devices, but that Schmidt (our courier) must go with me. I assented to this, and set off with Schmidt toward the bridge. I had no sooner passed from under the archway of the grand old gate, leading on to the bridge, than a trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the midday sun; yet I went on. I was in search of something—a small detail which I remembered with special intensity as part of my vision. There it was—the patch of rainbow light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star.

Before the autumn was at an end, and while the brown leaves still stood thick on the beeches in our park, my brother and Bertha were engaged to each other, and it was understood that their marriage was to take place early in the next spring. In spite of the certainty I had felt from that moment on the bridge at Prague, that Bertha would one day be my wife, my constitutional timidity and distrust had continued to benumb me, and the words, in which I had sometimes premeditated a confession of my love, had died away unuttered. The same conflict had gone on within me as before—the longing for an assurance of love from Bertha's lips, the dread lest a word of contempt and denial should fall upon me like a corrosive acid. What was the conviction of a distant necessity to me? I trembled under a present glance, I hungered after a present joy, I was clogged and chilled by a present fear. And so the days passed on; I witnessed Bertha's engagement and heard her marriage discussed as if I were under a conscious nightmare—knowing it was a dream that

would vanish, but feeling stifled under the grasp of hard-clutching fingers.

When I was not in Bertha's presence—and I was with her very often, for she continued to treat me with a playful patronage that wakened no jealousy in my brother—I spent my time chiefly in wandering, in strolling, or taking long rides while the daylight lasted, and then shutting myself up with my unread books; for books had lost the power of chaining my attention. My self-consciousness was heightened to that pitch of intensity in which our own emotions take the form of a drama, which urges itself imperatively on our contemplation, and we begin to weep, less under the sense of our suffering than at the thought of it. I felt a sort of pitying anguish over the pathos of my own lot; the lot of a being finely organized for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure—to whom the idea of future evil robbed the present of its joy, and for whom the idea of future good did not still the uneasiness of a present yearning or a present dread. I went dumbly through that stage of the poet's suffering, in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance and makes an image of his sorrows.

I was left entirely without remonstrance concerning this dreamy wayward life; I knew my father's thought about me: "That lad will never be good for anything in life; he may waste his years in an insignificant way on the income that falls to him; I shall not trouble myself about a career for him."

One mild morning, in the beginning of November, it happened that I was standing outside the portico, patting lazy old Cæsar, a Newfoundland almost blind with age, the only dog that ever took any notice of me—for the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me—when the groom brought up my brother's horse, which was to carry him to the hunt, and my brother himself appeared at the door, florid, broad-chested, and self-complacent, feeling what a good-natured fellow he was not to behave insolently to us all on the strength of his great advantages.

"Latimer, old boy," he said to me, in a tone of compassionate cordiality, "what a pity it is you don't have a run with the hounds now and then! The finest thing in the world for low spirits!"

"Low spirits!" I thought bitterly, as he rode away; "that is the sort of phrase with which narrow natures like yours

think to describe experience of which you can know no more than your horse knows. It is to such as you that the good of this world falls; ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit—these are the keys to happiness.”

The quick thought came, that my selfishness was even stronger than his—it was only a suffering selfishness instead of an enjoying one. But then, again, my exasperating insight into Alfred’s self-complacent soul, his freedom from all the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds toward him. This man needed no pity, no love; those fine influences would have been as little felt by him as the delicate white mist is felt by the rock it caresses. There was no evil in store for him; if he was not to marry Bertha, it would be because he had found a lot pleasanter to himself.

Mr. Filmore’s house lay not more than half a mile beyond our own gates; and whenever I knew my brother was gone in another direction, I went there for the chance of finding Bertha at home. Later on in the day I walked thither. By a rare accident she was alone, and we walked out in the grounds together, for she seldom went on foot beyond the trimly-swept gravel walks. I remember what a beautiful sylph she looked to me, as the low November sun shone on her blond hair, and she tripped along teasing me with her usual light banter, to which I listened half-fondly, half-moodily; it was all the sign Bertha’s mysterious inner self ever made to me. To-day, perhaps, the moodiness predominated, for I had not yet shaken off the access of jealous hate which my brother had raised in me by his parting patronage. Suddenly I interrupted and startled her by saying, almost fiercely, “Bertha, how can you love Alfred?”

She looked at me with surprise for a moment, but soon her light smile came again, and she answered sarcastically, “Why do you suppose I love him?”

“How can you ask that, Bertha?”

“What! your wisdom thinks I must love the man I’m going to marry? The most unpleasant thing in the world. I should quarrel with him; I should be jealous of him; our *ménage* would be conducted in a very ill-bred manner. A little quiet contempt contributes greatly to the elegance of life.”

“Bertha, that is not your real feeling. Why do you

delight in trying to deceive me by inventing such cynical speeches?"

"I need never take the trouble of invention in order to deceive you, my small Tasso"—that was the mocking name she usually gave me. "The easiest way to deceive a poet is to tell him the truth."

She was testing the validity of her epigram in a daring way, and for a moment the shadow of my vision—the Bertha whose soul was no secret to me—passed between me and the radiant girl, the playful sylph whose feelings were a fascinating mystery. I suppose I must have shuddered, or betrayed in some other way my momentary chill of horror.

"Tasso!" she said, seizing my wrist, and peeping round into my face, "are you really beginning to discern what a heartless girl I am? Why, you are not half the poet I thought you were; you are actually capable of believing the truth about me."

The shadow passed from between us, and was no longer the object nearest to me. The girl whose light fingers grasped me, whose elfish charming face looked into mine—who I thought was betraying an interest in my feelings that she would not have directly avowed—this warm-breathed presence again possessed my senses and imagination, like a returning syren melody which had been overpowered for an instant by the roar of threatening waves. It was a moment as delicious to me as the waking up to a consciousness of youth after a dream of middle age. I forgot everything but my passion, and said with swimming eyes,

"Bertha, shall you love me when we are first married? I wouldn't mind if you really loved me only for a little while."

Her look of astonishment, as she loosed my hand and started away from me recalled me to a sense of my strange, my criminal indiscretion.

"Forgive me," I said hurriedly, as soon as I could speak again; "I did not know what I was saying."

"Ah, Tasso's mad fit has come on, I see," she answered quietly, for she had recovered herself sooner than I had. "Let him go home and keep his head cool. I must go in, for the sun is setting."

I left her—full of indignation against myself. I had let slip words which, if she reflected on them, might rouse in her a suspicion of my abnormal mental condition—a suspicion

which of all things I dreaded. And besides that, I was ashamed of the apparent baseness I had committed in uttering them to my brother's betrothed wife. I wandered home slowly, entering our park through a private gate instead of by the lodges. As I approached the house, I saw a man dashing off at full speed from the stable-yard across the park. Had any accident happened at home? No; perhaps it was only one of my father's peremptory business errands that required this headlong haste. Nevertheless I quickened my pace without any distinct motive, and was soon at the house. I will not dwell on the scene I found there. My brother was dead—had been pitched from his horse, and killed on the spot by a concussion of the brain.

I went up to the room where he lay, and where my father was seated beside him with a look of rigid despair. I had shunned my father more than any one since our return home; for the radical antipathy between our natures made my insight into his inner self a constant affliction to me. But now, as I went up to him, and stood beside him in sad silence, I felt the presence of a new element that blended us as we had never been blent before.

My father had been one of the most successful men in the money-getting world; he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness. The heaviest trouble that had befallen him was the death of his first wife. But he married my mother soon after; and I remember he seemed exactly the same, to my keen childish observation, the week after her death as before. But now, at last, a sorrow had come—the sorrow of old age, which suffers the more from the crushing of its pride and its hopes, in proportion as the pride and hope are narrow and prosaic. His son was to have been married soon—would probably have stood for the borough at the next election: That son's existence was the best motive, that could be alleged, for making new purchases of land every year to round off the estate. It is a dreary thing to live on, doing the same things year after year, without knowing why we do them. Perhaps the tragedy of disappointed youth and passion is less piteous than the tragedy of disappointed age and worldliness.

As I saw into the desolation of my father's heart, I felt a movement of deep pity toward him, which was the beginning of a new affection—an affection that grew in spite of the

strange bitterness with which he regarded me in the first month or two after my brother's death. If it had not been for the softening influence of my compassion for him—the first deep compassion I had ever felt—I should have been stung by the perception that my father transferred the inheritance of an eldest son to me with a mortified sense that fate had compelled him to the unwelcome course of caring for me as an important being. It was only in spite of himself that he began to think of me with anxious regard. There is hardly any neglected child for whom death has made vacant a more favored place, who will not understand what I mean.

Gradually, however, my new deference to his wishes, the effect of that patience which was born of my pity for him, won upon his affection, and he began to please himself with the endeavor to make me fill my brother's place as fully as my feebler personality would admit. I saw that the prospect, which by and by presented itself, of my becoming Bertha's husband was welcome to him, and he contemplated in my case what he had not intended in my brother's—that his son and daughter-in-law should make one household with him.

My softened feeling toward my father made this the happiest time I had known since childhood—these last months in which I retained the delicious illusion of loving Bertha, of longing and doubting and hoping that she might love me. She behaved with a certain new consciousness and distance toward me after my brother's death; and I, too, was under a double constraint—that of delicacy toward my brother's memory, and of anxiety as to the impression my abrupt words had left on her mind. But the additional screen this mutual reserve erected between us only brought me more completely under her power; no matter how empty the adytum, so that the veil be thick enough.

So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden and uncertain, for the maintenance of that doubt and hope and effort which are the breath of its life, that if the whole future were laid bare to us beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be bent on the hours that lie between; we should pant after the uncertainties of our one morning and our one afternoon; we should rush fiercely to the exchange for our last possibility of speculation, of success, of disappointment; we should have a glut of political prophets foretelling a crisis or a no-crisis within the only twenty-four hours left open to

prophecy. Conceive the condition of the human mind if all propositions whatsoever were self-evident except one, which was to become self-evident at the close of a summer's day, but in the mean time might be the subject of question, of hypothesis, of debate. Art and philosophy, literature and science, would fasten like bees on that one proposition which had the honey of probability in it, and be the more eager because their enjoyment would end with sunset. Our impulses, our spiritual activities, no more adjust themselves to the idea of their future nullity than the beating of our heart or the irritability of our muscles.

Bertha, the slim, fair-haired girl, whose present thoughts and emotions were an enigma to me, amidst the fatiguing obviousness of the other minds around me, was as absorbing to me as this single unknown day—as a single hypothetical proposition, to remain problematic till sunset; and all the cramped, hemmed-in belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, of my nature, welled out in this one narrow channel.

And she made me believe that she loved me. Without ever quitting her tone of badinage and playful superiority, she intoxicated me with the sense that I was necessary to her, that she was never at ease unless I was near her, submitting to her playful tyranny. It costs a woman so little effort to besot us in this way! A half-repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance on our account, will serve us as *hashish* for a long while.

Out of the subtlest web of scarcely perceptible signs, she set me weaving the fancy that she had always unconsciously loved me better than Alfred; but that, with the ignorant fluttered sensibility of a young girl, she had been imposed on by the charm, that lay for her in the distinction, of being admired and chosen by a man who made so brilliant a figure in the world as my brother. She satirized herself in a very graceful way for her vanity and ambition. What was it to me that I had the light of my wretched prevision on the fact that, now, it was I who possessed all but the personal part of my brother's advantages? Our sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of color that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags.

We were married eighteen months after Alfred's death, one cold, clear morning in April, when there came hail and sunshine both together; and Bertha, in her white silk and

pale-green leaves, and the pale hues of her hair and face, looked like the spirit of the morning. My father was happier than he had thought of being again; my marriage, he felt sure, would complete the desirable modification of my character, and make me practical and worldly enough to take my place in society among sane men. For he delighted in Bertha's tact and acuteness, and felt sure she would be mistress of me, and make me what she chose; I was only twenty-one, and madly in love with her. Poor father! He kept that hope a little while after our first year of marriage, and it was not quite extinct, when paralysis came and saved him from utter disappointment.

I shall hurry through the rest of my story, not dwelling so much as I have hitherto done on my inward experience. When people are well known to each other, they talk rather of what befalls them externally, leaving their feelings and sentiments to be inferred.

We lived in a round of visits for some time after our return home, giving splendid dinner-parties, and making a sensation in our neighborhood by the new lustre of our equipage, for my father had reserved this display of his increased wealth for the period of his son's marriage; and we gave our acquaintances liberal opportunity for remarking, that it was a pity I made so poor a figure as an heir and a bridegroom.

The nervous fatigue of this existence, the insincerities and platitudes which I had to live through twice over—through my inner and outward sense—would have been maddening to me if I had not had that sort of intoxicated callousness which came from the delights of a first passion. A bride and bridegroom, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth, hurried through the day by the whirl of society, filling their solitary moments with hastily snatched caresses, are prepared for their future life together as the novice is prepared for the cloister—by experiencing its utmost contrast.

Through all these crowded, excited months, Bertha's inward self remained shrouded from me, and I still read her thoughts only through the language of her lips and demeanor; I had still the human interest of wondering whether what I did and said pleased her, of longing to hear a word of affection, of giving a delicious exaggeration of meaning to her smile. But I was conscious of a growing difference in her manner toward me; sometimes strong enough to be called

haughty coldness, cutting and chilling me as the hail had done that came across the sunshine on our marriage morning; sometimes only perceptible in the dexterous avoidance of a *tête-à-tête* walk or dinner to which I had been looking forward. I had been deeply pained by this—had even felt a sort of crushing of the heart, from the sense that my brief day of happiness was near its setting; but still I remained dependent on Bertha, eager for the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone forever, hoping and watching for some after-glow more beautiful from the impending night.

I remember—how should I not remember?—the time when that dependence and hope utterly left me, when the sadness I had felt in Bertha's growing estrangement, became a joy that I looked back upon with longing, as a man might look back on the last pains in a paralyzed limb.

It was just after the close of my father's last illness, which had necessarily withdrawn us from society and thrown us more upon each other. It was the evening of my father's death. On that evening the veil which had shrouded Bertha's soul from me—had made me find in her alone, among my fellow-beings, the blessed possibility of mystery and doubt and expectation—was first withdrawn. Perhaps it was the first day since the beginning of my passion for her, in which that passion was neutralized by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind.

I had been watching by my father's death-bed; I had been witnessing the last fitful, yearning glance his soul had cast back on the spent inheritance of life—the last faint consciousness of love he had gathered from the pressure of my hand. What are all our personal loves when we have been sharing in that supreme agony? In the first moments when we come away from the presence of death, every other relation to the living is merged, to our feeling, in the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny.

In that state of mind I joined Bertha in her private sitting-room. She was seated, in a leaning posture, on a settee, with her back toward the door; the great rich coils of her pale blond hair, surmounting her small neck, visible above the back of the settee. I remember, as I closed the door behind me, a cold tremulousness seizing me, and a vague sense of being hated and lonely—vague and strong, like a presentiment. I know how I looked at that moment, for I saw my-

self in Bertha's thought as she lifted her cutting gray eyes and looked at me; a miserable ghost-seer, surrounded by phantoms in the noonday, trembling under a breeze when the leaves were still, without appetite for the common objects of human desire, but pining after the moonbeams.

We were front to front with each other, and judged each other. The terrible moment of complete illumination had come to me, and I saw that the darkness had hidden no landscape from me, but only a blank, prosaic wall. From that evening forth, through the sickening years which followed, I saw all round the narrow room of this woman's soul—saw petty artifice and mere negation, where I had delighted to believe in coy sensibilities and wit at war with latent feeling—saw the light, floating vanities of the girl defining themselves into the systematic coquetry, the scheming selfishness, of the woman—saw repulsion and antipathy harden into hatred, giving pain only for the sake of wreaking itself.

For Bertha too, after her kind, felt the bitterness of disillusion. She had believed that my wild, poet's passion for her would make me her slave; and that, being her slave, I should execute her will in all things. With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unmanageable forces. Our positions were reversed. Before marriage she had completely mastered my imagination, for she was a secret to me; and I created the unknown thought before which I trembled as if it were hers. But now that her soul was laid open to me, now that I was compelled to share the privacy of her motives, to follow all the petty devices that preceded her words and acts, she found herself powerless with me, except to produce in me the chill shudder of repulsion—powerless, because I could be acted on by no lever within her reach. I was dead to worldly ambitions, to social vanities, to all incentives within the compass of her narrow imagination, and I lived under influences utterly invisible to her.

She was really pitiable to have such a husband, and so all the world thought. A graceful, brilliant woman, like Bertha, who smiled on morning callers, made a figure in ballrooms, and was capable of that light repartee which, from such a woman, is accepted as wit, was secure of carrying off all sym-

pathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained.

Even the servants in our house gave her the balance of their regard and pity. For there were no audible quarrels between us; our alienation, our repulsion from each other, lay within the silence of our own hearts; and if the mistress went out a great deal, and seemed to dislike the master's society, was it not natural, poor thing? The master was odd. I was kind and just to my dependants, but I excited in them a shrinking, half-contemptuous pity; for this class, of men and women, are but slightly determined in their estimate of others by general considerations, or even experience, of character. They judge of persons as they judge of coins, and value those who pass current at a high rate.

After a time I interfered so little with Bertha's habits, that it might seem wonderful how her hatred toward me could grow so intense and active as it did. But she had begun to suspect, by some involuntary betrayals of mine, that there was an abnormal power of penetration in me—that fitfully, at least, I was strangely cognizant of her thoughts and intentions—and she began to be haunted by a terror of me, which alternated every now and then with defiance. She meditated continually how the incubus could be shaken off her life—how she could be freed from this hateful bond to a being whom she at once despised as an imbecile, and dreaded as an inquisitor. For a long while she lived in the hope that my evident wretchedness would drive me to the commission of suicide; but suicide was not in my nature. I was too completely swayed by the sense that I was in the grasp of unknown forces, to believe in my power of self-release.

Toward my own destiny I had become entirely passive; for my one ardent desire had spent itself, and impulse no longer predominated over knowledge. For this reason I never thought of taking any steps toward a complete separation, which would have made our alienation evident to the world. Why should I rush for help to a new course, when I was only suffering from the consequences of a deed which had been the act of my intensest will? That would have been the logic of one who had desires to gratify, and I had no desires. But Bertha and I lived more and more aloof from each other. The rich find it easy to live married and apart.

That course of our life which I have indicated in a few

sentences filled the space of years. So much misery, so slow and hideous a growth of hatred and sin, may be compressed into a sentence! And men judge of each other's lives through this summary medium. They epitomize the experience of their fellow-mortal, and pronounce judgment on him in neat syntax, and feel themselves wise and virtuous—conquerors over the temptations they define in well-selected predicates. Years of wretchedness glide glibly over the lips of the man who has never counted them out in moments of chill disappointment, of head and heart throbbings, of dread and vain wrestling, of remorse and despair. We learn words by rote, but not their meaning; that must be paid for with our life-blood, and printed in the subtle fibres of our nerves.

But I will hasten to finish my story. Brevity is justified at once to those who readily understand, and to those who will never understand.

Some years after my father's death, I was sitting by the dim firelight in my library one January evening—sitting in the leather chair that used to be my father's—when Bertha appeared at the door, with a candle in her hand, and advanced toward me. I knew the ball-dress she had on—the white ball-dress, with the green jewels, shone upon by the light of the wax candle which lit up the medallion, of the dying Cleopatra, on the mantel-piece. Why did she come to me before going out? I had not seen her in the library, which was my habitual place, for months. Why did she stand before me with the candle in her hand, with her cruel, contemptuous eyes fixed on me, and the glittering serpent, like a familiar demon, on her breast? For a moment I thought this fulfilment of my vision at Vienna marked some dreadful crisis in my fate, but I saw nothing in Bertha's mind, as she stood before me, except scorn for the look of overwhelming misery with which I sat before her. . . . "Fool, idiot, why don't you kill yourself, then?"—that was her thought. But at length her thoughts reverted to her errand, and she spoke aloud. The, apparently, indifferent nature of the errand seemed to make an absurd anti-climax to my prevision and my agitation.

"I have had to hire a new maid. Fletcher is going to be married, and she wants me to ask you to let her husband have the public-house and farm at Molton. I wish him to have it. You must give the promise now, because Fletcher is going to-morrow morning—and quickly, because I'm in a hurry."

"Very well; you may promise her," I said indifferently, and Bertha swept out of the library again.

I always shrank from the sight of a new person, and all the more when it was a person whose mental life was likely to weary my reluctant insight with worldly, ignorant trivialities. But I shrank especially from the sight of this new maid, because her advent had been announced to me at a moment to which I could not cease to attach some fatality. I had a vague dread that I should find her mixed up with the dreary drama of my life—that some new sickening vision would reveal her to me as an evil genius. When at last I did unavoidably meet her, the vague dread was changed into definite disgust.

She was a tall, wiry, dark-eyed woman, this Mrs. Archer, with a face handsome enough to give her coarse, hard nature the odious finish of bold, self-confident coquetry. That was enough to make me avoid her, quite apart from the contemptuous feeling with which she contemplated me. I seldom saw her; but I perceived that she rapidly became a favorite with her mistress, and after the lapse of eight or nine months, I began to be aware that there had arisen in Bertha's mind toward this woman a mingled feeling of fear and dependence, and that this feeling was associated with ill-defined images of candle-light scenes in her dressing-room, and the locking-up of something in Bertha's cabinet. My interviews with my wife had become so brief and so rarely solitary, that I had no opportunity of perceiving these images in her mind with more definiteness. The recollections of the past become contracted, in the rapidity of thought, till they, sometimes, bear hardly a more distinct resemblance to the external reality, than the forms of an oriental alphabet to the objects that suggested them.

Besides, for the last year or more a modification had been going forward in my mental condition, and was growing more and more marked. My insight into the minds of those around me, was becoming dimmer and more fitful, and the ideas that crowded my double consciousness became less and less dependent on any personal contact. All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me. But, along with this relief from wearisome insight, there was a new development of what

I concluded—as I have since found rightly—to be a prevision of external scenes. It was as if the relation between me and my fellow-men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life.

The more I lived apart from society, and in proportion as my wretchedness subsided from the violent throb of agonized passion into the dulness of habitual pain, the more frequent and vivid became such visions as that I had had of Prague—of strange cities, of sandy plains, of gigantic ruins, of midnight skies with strange bright constellations, of mountain-passes, of grassy nooks flecked with the afternoon sunshine through the boughs. I was in the midst of such scenes, and in all of them one presence seemed to weigh on me in all these shapes—the presence of something unknown and pitiless. For continual suffering had annihilated religious faith within me; to the utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved—there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils. And beyond all these, and continually recurring, was the vision of my death—the pangs, the suffocation, the last struggle, when life would be grasped at in vain.

Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognizance of any other consciousness than my own, and, instead of intruding involuntarily into the world of other minds, was living continually in my own solitary future. Bertha was aware that I was greatly changed. To my surprise she had of late seemed to seek opportunities of remaining in my society, and had cultivated that kind of distant yet familiar talk which is customary between a husband and wife who live in polite and irrevocable alienation. I bore this with languid submission, and without feeling enough interest in her motives to be roused into keen observation; yet I could not help perceiving something triumphant and excited in her carriage and the expression of her face—something too subtle to express itself in words or tones, but giving one the idea that she lived in a state of expectation or hopeful suspense. My chief feeling was satisfaction that her inner self was once more shut out from me; and I almost revelled, for the moment, in the absent melancholy that made me answer her at cross-purposes, and betray utter ignorance of what she had been saying.

I remember well the look and the smile with which she

one day said, after a mistake of this kind on my part—"I used to think you were a clairvoyant, and that was the reason why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants, wanting to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world."

I said nothing in reply. It occurred to me that her recent obtrusion of herself upon me, might have been prompted by the wish to test my power of detecting some of her secrets; but I let the thought drop again at once. Her motives and her deeds had no interest for me, and, whatever pleasures she might be seeking, I had no wish to balk her. There was still pity in my soul for every living thing, and Bertha was living—was surrounded with possibilities of misery.

Just at this time there occurred an event which roused me somewhat from my inertia, and gave me an interest in the passing moment that I had thought impossible for me. It was a visit from Charles Meunier, who had written me word that he was coming to England for relaxation from too strenuous labor, and would like to see me. Meunier had now a European reputation; but his letter to me expressed that keen remembrance of an early regard, an early debt of sympathy, which is inseparable from nobility of character; and I, too, felt as if his presence would be to me like a transient resurrection into a happier pre-existence.

He came, and, as far as possible, I renewed our old pleasure of making *tête-à-tête* excursions; though, instead of mountains and glaciers and the wide blue lake, we had to content ourselves with mere slopes and ponds and artificial plantations. The years had changed us both, but with what different result! Meunier was now a brilliant figure in society, to whom elegant women pretended to listen, and whose acquaintance was boasted of by noblemen ambitious of brains. He repressed, with the utmost delicacy, all betrayal of the shock which I am sure he must have received from our meeting, or of a desire to penetrate into my condition and circumstances, and sought by the utmost exertion of his charming social powers to make our reunion agreeable.

Bertha was much struck by the unexpected fascinations of a visitor whom she had expected to find presentable only on the score of his celebrity, and put forth all her coqueties and accomplishments. Apparently she succeeded in attracting his admiration, for his manner toward her was attentive

and flattering. The effect of his presence on me was so benignant, especially in those renewals of our old *tête-à-tête* wanderings, when he poured forth to me wonderful narratives of his professional experience, that more than once, when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for *me*, too, in his science? Might there not, at least, lie some comprehension and sympathy ready for me in his large and susceptible mind? But the thought only flickered feebly now and then, and died out before it could become a wish. The horror I had of again breaking in on the privacy of another soul made me, by an irrational instinct, draw the shroud of concealment more closely around my own, as we automatically perform the gesture we feel to be wanting in another.

When Meunier's visit was approaching its conclusion, there happened an event which caused some excitement in our household, owing to the surprisingly strong effect it appeared to produce on Bertha—on Bertha, the self-possessed, who usually seemed inaccessible to feminine agitations, and even hated in a self-restrained, hygienic manner. This event was the sudden severe illness of her maid, Mrs. Archer.

I have reserved to this moment the mention of a circumstance which had forced itself on my notice shortly before Meunier's arrival, namely, that there had been some quarrel between Bertha and this maid, apparently during a visit, to a distant family, in which she had accompanied her mistress. I had overheard Archer speaking in a tone of bitter insolence, which I should have thought an adequate reason for immediate dismissal. No dismissal followed; on the contrary, Bertha seemed to be silently putting up with personal inconveniences from the exhibitions of this woman's temper. I was the more astonished to observe that her illness seemed a cause of strong solicitude to Bertha; that she was at the bedside night and day, and would allow no one else to officiate as head-nurse. It happened that our family doctor was out on a holiday, an accident which made Meunier's presence in the house doubly welcome, and he apparently entered into the case with an interest which seemed so much stronger than the ordinary professional feeling, that one day, when he had

fallen into a long fit of silence after visiting her, I said to him—

“Is this a very peculiar case of disease, Meunier?”

“No,” he answered, “it is an attack of peritonitis, which will be fatal, but which does not differ physically from many other cases that have come under my observation. But I’ll tell you what I have on my mind. I want to make an experiment on this woman, if you will give me permission. It can do her no harm—will give her no pain—for I shall not make it until life is extinct to all purposes of sensation. I want to try the effect of transfusing blood into her arteries after the heart has ceased to beat for some minutes. I have tried the experiment, again and again, with animals that have died of this disease, with astounding results, and I want to try it on a human subject. I have the small tubes necessary, in a case I have with me, and the rest of the apparatus could be prepared readily. I should use my own blood—take it from my own arm. This woman won’t live through the night, I’m convinced; and I want you to promise me your assistance in making the experiment. I can’t do without another hand, but it would perhaps not be well to call in a medical assistant from among your provincial doctors. A disagreeable, foolish version of the thing might get abroad.”

“Have you spoken to my wife on the subject?” I said, “because she appears to be peculiarly sensitive about this woman; she has been a favorite maid.”

“To tell you the truth,” said Meunier, “I don’t want her to know about it. There are always insuperable difficulties with women in these matters, and the effect on the supposed dead body may be startling. You and I will sit up together, and be in readiness. When certain symptoms appear I shall take you in, and at the right moment we must manage to get every one else out of the room.”

I need not give our further conversation on the subject. He entered very fully into the details, and overcame my repulsion from them, by exciting in me a mingled awe and curiosity concerning the possible results of his experiment.

We prepared everything, and he instructed me in my part as assistant. He had not told Bertha of his conviction that Archer would not survive through the night, and he had endeavored to persuade her to leave the patient and take a night’s rest. But she was obstinate, suspecting the fact that

death was at hand, and supposing that he wished merely to save her nerves. She refused to leave the sick-room. Meunier and I sat up together in the library, he making frequent visits to the sick-room, and returning with the information that the case was taking precisely the course he expected. Once he said to me, "Can you imagine any cause of ill-feeling this woman has against her mistress, who is so devoted to her?"

"I think there was some misunderstanding between them before her illness. Why do you ask?"

"Because I have observed for the last five or six hours—since, I fancy, she has lost all hope of recovery—there seems a strange prompting in her to say something which pain and failing strength forbid her to utter; and there is a threatening look in her eyes, which she turns continually toward her mistress. In this disease the mind often remains singularly clear to the last."

"I am not surprised at an indication of malevolent feeling in her," I said. "She is a woman who has always inspired me with distrust and dislike, but she managed to insinuate herself into her mistress' favor." He was silent after this, looking at the fire with an air of absorption, till he went upstairs again. He stayed away longer than usual, and, on returning, said to me quietly, "Come now."

I followed him to the chamber where death was hovering. The dark hangings of the large bed made a background that gave a strong relief to Bertha's pale face as I entered. She started forward as she saw me enter, and then looked at Meunier with an expression of angry inquiry; but he lifted up his hand, as if to impose silence, while he fixed his glance on the dying woman and felt her pulse. The face was pinched and ghastly, a cold perspiration was on the forehead, and the eyelids were lowered so as almost to hide the large dark eyes.

After a minute Meunier walked round to the other side of the bed, where Bertha stood, and, with his usual air of gentle politeness toward her, begged her to leave the patient under our care—everything should be done for her—she was no longer in a state to be conscious of an affectionate presence. Bertha was hesitating, apparently almost willing to believe his assurance and to comply. She looked round at the ghastly, dying face, as if to read the confirmation of that assurance, when for a moment the lowered eyelids were raised

again, and it seemed as if the eyes were looking toward Bertha, but blankly. A shudder passed through Bertha's frame, and she returned to her station near the pillow, tacitly implying that she would not leave the room.

The eyelids were lifted no more. Once I looked at Bertha as she watched the face of the dying one. She wore a rich *peignoir*, and her blond hair was half covered by a lace cap; in her attire she was, as always, an elegant woman, fit to figure in a picture of modern aristocratic life; but I asked myself how that face of hers could ever have seemed to me the face of a woman born of woman, with memories of childhood, capable of pain, needing to be fondled? The features at that moment seemed so preternaturally sharp, the eyes were so hard and eager—she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race. For across those hard features, there came something like a flash when the last hour had been breathed out, and we all felt that the dark veil had completely fallen.

What secret was there between Bertha and this woman? I turned my eyes from her with a horrible dread lest my insight should return, and I should be obliged to see what had been breeding about two unloving women's hearts. I felt that Bertha had been watching for the moment of death as the sealing of her secret; I thanked Heaven it could remain sealed for me.

Meunier said quietly, "She is gone." He then gave his arm to Bertha, and she submitted to be led out of the room.

I suppose it was at her order that two female attendants came into the room, and dismissed the younger one who had been present before. When they entered, Meunier had already opened the artery in the neck that lay rigid on the pillow, and I dismissed them, ordering them to remain at a distance till we rang; the doctor, I said, had an operation to perform—he was not sure about the cause of her death. For the next twenty minutes I forgot everything but Meunier and the experiment in which he was so absorbed, that I think his senses would have been closed against all sounds or sights which had no relation to it. It was my task, at first, to keep up the artificial respiration in the body, after the transfusion had been effected; but presently Meunier relieved me, and I could see the wondrous, slow return of life. The breast began to heave, the inspirations became stronger, the eyelids quivered,

and the soul seemed to have returned beneath them. The artificial respiration was withdrawn; still the breathing continued, and there was a movement of the lips.

Just then I heard the handle of the door moving; I suppose Bertha had heard from the women that they had been dismissed; probably a vague fear had arisen in her mind, for she entered with a look of alarm. She came to the foot of the bed and gave a stifled cry.

The dead woman's eyes were wide open, and met hers in full recognition—the recognition of hate. With a sudden strong effort, the hand that Bertha had thought forever still was pointed toward her, and the haggard face moved. The gasping, eager voice said:

“You mean to poison your husband . . . the poison is in the black cabinet. . . . I got it for you . . . you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting . . . because you were jealous . . . are you sorry . . . now?”

The lips continued to murmur, but the sounds were no longer distinct. Soon there was no sound—only a slight movement; the flame had leaped out, and was being extinguished the faster. The wretched woman's heart-strings had been set to hatred and vengeance; the spirit of life had swept the chords for an instant, and was gone again forever. Great God! Is this what it is to live again? . . . to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?

Bertha stood pale at the foot of the bed, quivering and helpless, despairing of devices, like a cunning animal whose hiding-places are surrounded by swift advancing flame. Even Meunier looked paralyzed; life, for that moment, ceased to be a scientific problem to him. As for me, this scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence; horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like an old pain recurring with new circumstances.

* * * * *

Since then Bertha and I have lived apart—she in her own neighborhood, the mistress of half our wealth; I as a wanderer in foreign countries, until I came to this Devonshire nest to die. Bertha lives, pitied and admired; for what had I against that charming woman, whom every one but myself

could have been happy with ? There had been no witness of the scene in the dying-room except Meunier, and while Meunier lived his lips were sealed by a promise to me.

Once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favorite spot, and my heart went out toward the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me; but I was driven away again in terror at the approach of my old insight—driven away to live continually with the one unknown presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky. Till at last disease took hold of me and forced me to rest here—forced me to live in dependence on my servants. And then the curse of insight—of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me. I know all their narrow thoughts, their feeble regard, their half-wearied pity.

* * * * *

It is the 20th of September, 1850. I know these figures, I have just written, as if they were a long-familiar inscription. I have seen them on this page, in my desk, unnumbered times, when the scene of my dying struggle has opened upon me.

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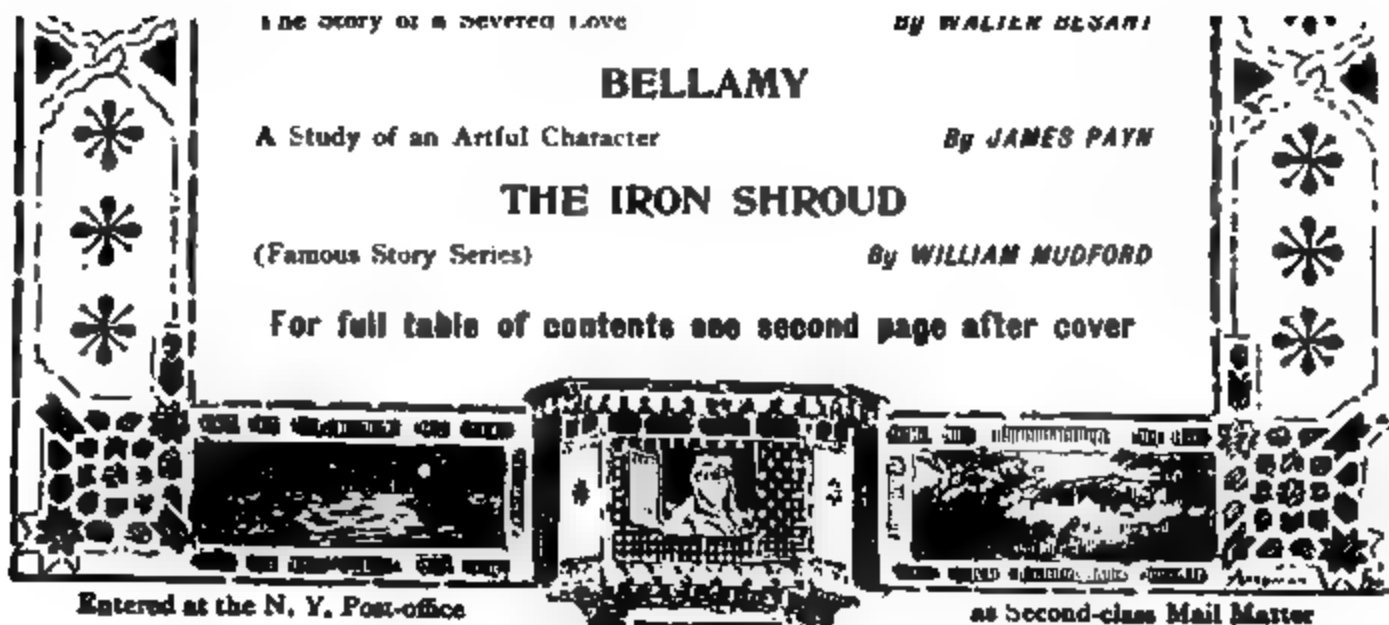
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ANNOUNCEMENT.

Mr. Philander Stansbury, of Washington, D. C., has been adjudged the winner of Prize Competition No. 1. His fable is printed in this number of Short Stories under the title "The Kingdom of Leona."

The winner of Prize No. 2 is M. S. Paden, of Denver, Colo., for the best "Western Dialect" story, which will appear in Short Stories for July.

For other announcements and for interesting information regarding combination subscription offers see front advertising pages.

THE KINGDOM OF LEONA

BY PHILANDER STANSBURY

A fable, satirizing a manifest foible of the day, which has been awarded the prize in competition No. 1.

Once upon a time, in the not very distant past, the good Queen Multicubs, whose eldest son, the Prince Felis Leo, was heir to the throne, reigned over the ancient kingdom of Leona.

But while, like a loving son, awaiting patiently enough the hour when his venerable mother should relinquish to him the sceptre she had wielded so long and so well, the jolly prince passed his time in occupations and among companions such as caused his virtuous mother many a blush, and her pious subjects to look forward, shudderingly, to the time when he should become *ex officio* head of the Church and Defender of the Faith.

But notwithstanding these low tastes and habits, his Royal Highness Felis Leo was regarded as the glass of fashion and the mould of form by all those of his mother's liege subjects who made any pretensions to social standing. To the younger lions, indeed, his example had all the force of positive law, and its influence even extended across the seas into other countries where kings were not—though perhaps by some

secretly longed for. So that if the heir apparent chanced to part his royal mane in a particular manner, it forthwith became the sole business of every young lion, with any social aspirations whatever, to see that his own was similarly arranged whenever he appeared in public.

Of course to have gambled with his Royal Highness, or to have spent the night in his company under the same dinner table, was almost equal to a patent of nobility to the happy young lion who could claim the honor.

This being the state of affairs, it chanced that one night, in escaping rather hurriedly from the house of an old lion who held heretical views as to the honor conferred upon his family by the royal visits, the prince slammed the door violently upon his own exalted tail, whereby it was so severely injured that the court surgeons, when summoned, declared amputation to be necessary. The operation was accordingly performed, and, at the next drawing-room, the unfortunate prince made his appearance shorn of that adornment which seems logically necessary, if I may so express it, to complete lionhood. Such a misfortune might have driven any private citizen in the kingdom into retirement, but it was otherwise with the prince.

It was no sooner remarked, by his young followers and imitators, that their beloved exemplar was tailless than they began one and all to bemoan their own endowment in that particular, and, at a conference held soon after by a small number of the ultra-fashionable, it was unanimously decided that the disgraceful appendages must be got rid of at any cost. A consultation with the fashionable physicians proved quite satisfactory; for, by the use of anæsthetics, the operation necessary could be made comparatively painless.

In a few weeks' time tailless lions became so common upon the streets as to excite little remark; while at court, by the pressure of public opinion, acaudality became *de rigueur*. During the prevalence of this mania, some parents even went so far as to have the operation performed upon their children in their early cubhood—along with baptism and vaccination; but, then, some will always be extreme.

For a time all went well, and the fashionable world of Leona, together with its imitators in other lands—particularly the young eagles, who pulled out all their tail-feathers in order to be as much like *Felis Leo* as might be—con-

gratulated itself upon having happily tided over a dreadful crisis.

But earthly happiness is in its nature fleeting, and never more so than in this case. For it happened one day, or rather one night, that Felis Leo, having overeaten himself at a banquet of hippopotamus' flesh, was gathered suddenly to his fathers, in spite of the combined efforts of the whole College of Surgeons, and his brother, Prince Longclaws, became heir apparent in his room.

Now, Longclaws was a young man of a serious turn of mind, with a leaning to Calvinism and Greek roots; which vulgar tastes had of course kept him much away from court, so that he had not been affected by the mania for amputation which had possessed all who belonged to Felis Leo's set. The courtiers beheld with horror and the darkest misgivings the accession to the heirship of a prince who had a tail as long as any low-born lion among his future subjects; and there was even some loose talk of an act of settlement to exclude from the succession one so palpably unfit to reign. But of course all this came to nothing in the end, and Longclaws was duly declared to be the heir to the crown and dignities of his worthy mother.

And now began dark days for those hasty time-servers who had mutilated themselves in the hope of standing well with the late prince. For the new leader of fashion, being himself amply provided in the matter of a tail, could not be expected to look with favor upon those whom he must have regarded as deformed; and it was soon noticed that he chose his officers and lords in waiting, his lord high trousers-creasers and warmers of the royal shirt, etc., from among those few members of the court who, in spite of contumely and ridicule, had adhered to their inherited terminations.

What was to be done? To cut tails off is comparatively simple, though somewhat painful, but to stick them on again—ay, there's the rub. Grow out again they would not, though some shrewd quacks drove a large trade by advertising unguents and elixirs warranted to restore the most abbreviated tail to its pristine length and beauty, thus imposing upon the credulity of the more simple-minded of the courtiers. There was nothing left for the unfortunate victims but to retire to private stations where their deformity would be less conspicuous, and this was the course adopted by most.

Some betook themselves to their estates in the country, where, in the retirement of a rural life, they had ample leisure to reflect upon the mutabilities of fashion and the hardships endured by her votaries. Others, less wise, attempted to brazen the matter out by remaining at court and clinging to such posts as could be exacted from the good nature or the pity of the new heir, but they soon lost all dignity and consideration.

An occasional survivor of this unhappy band will still be pointed out by the inhabitants of Leona, as he slinks by with an apologetic air as though conscious of his own disgrace.

MORAL.

This fable teaches us that while the accidental deformities of the great may be more worthy of imitation than the virtues of the obscure, yet, nevertheless, extremes are to be avoided. And, though not strictly germane to the issue, we may be permitted to remark that when one is compelled to carry about a step-ladder in order to be able to shake hands with fashionable acquaintances, the *reductio ad absurdum* is in sight.

THE SPIRITS' MOUNTAIN

BY GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER

In this thrilling tale we are transported to Spain in the days of romance and superstitious beliefs. The spirits of monkish knights and nobles, slain in battle, throng round us on the haunted mountain; and, while the midnight bells are solemnly tolling, we watch with bated breath the punishment that overtakes the haughty and cruel damsel who has driven her lover to a terrible death. From the Spanish, by Mary Springer : For Short Stories.

"Fasten the dogs, blow the horns to call the huntsmen together, and let us take a turn around the city.

"Night is approaching; it is All Souls' Day, and we are on the Spirits' Mountain."

"So soon!"

"If it were any other day but this, I would not give up hunting that pack of wolves, which the snows of Moncayo have driven from their dens; but it is impossible to-day. They will soon call to prayers at the monastery of the Knights Templar, and the bells will commence to toll for the dead in the chapel on the mountain."

"In that ruined chapel! Bah, you wish to frighten me!"

"No, my lovely cousin, but you are not aware of all that has occurred in this country, for it is only a year since you came back. Slacken your horse's pace, and I will tell you a story."

The pages were gathered in merry groups; the counts of Borges and Alardiel were mounted on magnificent steeds, and they rode behind their son and daughter, Alonso and Beatriz, who kept on at some distance ahead of the cavalcade. Alonso went on as follows:

"This mountain, which is now called the Spirits' Mountain, formerly belonged to the Knights Templar who were warlike monks. After Soria had been conquered from the Moors, the king sent for the Templars to come from a distant land to defend the city on the side next to the bridge; thus wounding the feelings of the nobility of Castile, who, as they had conquered the city, were capable of defending it without any outside help.

"Therefore the knights of that new and powerful religious order and the noblemen of the city were on bad terms for several years, and finally this feeling deepened to a profound hatred.

"The Templars had this part of the mountain set aside as a preserve for game to satisfy their wants and contribute to their pleasure; while the nobles determined to organize a grand hunt in the enclosure, in spite of the severe prohibitions of the monks with spurs—as they styled their enemies.

"The news spread fast; but the noblemen determined to carry out their purpose, though they knew that the Knights Templar intended, if possible, to put a stop to their sport.

"The expedition was carried out, and they did not once think of the game, for they fought with one another, and many a poor mother had to mourn the loss of her son. Instead of a hunt, there was a frightful battle; the mountain was strewn with corpses, and the wolves they had desired to exterminate enjoyed a bloody feast.

"Finally, the king interfered and commanded that the mountain, the cause of so much misfortune, should be abandoned. So the monks' chapel situated on the mountain, and wherein friends and enemies were buried together, gradually fell into ruins.

"But ever since, on All Souls' Eve, the chapel bell tolls for the dead; and the ghosts, enveloped in their shrouds, roam around through the woods and bushes, as though engaged in a fantastic hunting expedition. The deer fly before them, bleating with fear, the serpents hiss fearfully, and on the following day the footprints of the fleshless ghosts are seen on the snow. Therefore in Soria we call it the Spirits' Mountain, and for that reason I have thought best to leave it before night sets in."

Alonso finished his story just as the two young people reached the end of the bridge which extends to the city on the other side. They waited for the rest of the cavalcade to join them, and all entered together the warm, dark streets of Soria.

The servants had just cleared the table, and a bright fire was playing in the Gothic fire-place, shedding its glow on several groups of ladies and gentlemen, who were talking around the hearth, while the wind beat against the windows.

Only two persons did not take part in the general conversation, Beatriz and Alonso.

Beatriz was watching the flickering flames, absorbed in her own thoughts, while Alonso was gazing admiringly at her blue eyes.

Both had been silent for some time.

The old women were telling blood-curdling stories about ghosts and spirits, while the church bells of Soria were tolling for the dead with a sad and doleful sound.

"My lovely cousin," finally exclaimed Alonso, breaking the deep silence, "we are soon to separate, perhaps forever. You do not like the arid plains of Castile, its severe and warlike customs, its simple, patriarchal habits, I know full well. I have heard you sigh several times, and perhaps it is for some lover you have left in your far-off home."

Beatriz made a gesture of indifference, and her disposition was revealed in the scornful curl of her lip.

"Perhaps you are sighing for the pomps of the French court, where you have lived up to the present time," the young man hastened to say. "Anyway, I foresee that I shall soon lose you; and when we separate, I would like to have you carry away a remembrance of me. Do you remember when we went to church to give thanks to God for having restored your health, which you came to seek here? The jewel that fastened the plume in my cap attracted your attention. How well it would look in your dark hair, confining your veil. It has already been used for that purpose by a bride; for my father gave it to my mother, and she wore it to the altar. Would you like to have it?"

"I do not know how it is in your country; but in mine, if one receives a present, it is binding. Only on a holiday can one accept a present from a relative—who can even go to Rome without coming back with empty hands."

The scornful tone in which Beatriz pronounced these words disturbed the young man a little, but finally recovering himself, he said in a sad tone:

"I am aware of it, cousin, but to-day is All Saints' Day, and your nameday as well as that of others; so it is a fitting time to receive gifts, I assure you. Will you accept this from me?"

Beatriz slightly bit her lip, and extended her hand to take the jewel, without saying a word.

The two young people again remained silent, though the old women's voices could be heard as they went on talking about witches and ghosts, while the howling of the wind as it shook the casements, and the tolling of the bells, still continued.

After a few moments, Alonso proceeded.

"Before the end of All Saints' Day, which is my nameday as well as yours, you may give me a souvenir without compromising yourself. Will you not do so?" urged Alonso, fixing his eyes on his cousin's, which gleamed brightly as a diabolical thought flashed through her mind.

"Why not?" she exclaimed, carrying her hand to her right shoulder, as though seeking for something amid the folds of her wide velvet sleeve embroidered with gold. Then with a childish air of disappointment, she added:

"Do you recollect the blue ribbon I wore to-day on the hunting expedition, and which you said was the emblem of your soul on account of its color?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I have lost it. I have lost it, and I wanted to give it to you as a souvenir."

"Where was it lost?" inquired Alonso, raising himself in his seat, with an indescribable expression of mingled fear and hope.

"I do not know, perhaps on the mountain."

"On the Spirits' Mountain?" he murmured, turning pale, and throwing himself back in his chair, "on the Spirits' Mountain!" Then he went on in a harsh, trembling tone: "You know, for you have heard everybody say so times without number, that I am called the king of huntsmen throughout Castile. As I have not yet been able to try my strength in battle, as my ancestors have done, I have exerted, in that pastime of warlike sport, all the hereditary ardor of my race and all the strength of which I am possessed. The mat under your feet is the skin of a wild animal I slew with my own hands. I know its haunts and its habits; I have fought against them day and night, on foot and on horseback, alone and together with other huntsmen, and nobody can say that I ever shrank from danger at any time. On any other night I would fly to bring you that ribbon, and would do so joyfully; but to-night, yes, to-night—why should I hide it from you?—I am afraid. Do you not hear the bells tolling? The hour for evening prayer has struck at San Juan del Duero; the ghosts begin to emerge from their graves, curdling the blood of any one who beholds them, turning his hair gray, or dragging him off in the whirl of their fantastic dance, as a leaf is swept along by the breeze."

An almost imperceptible smile curled Beatriz's lips while the young man was talking, and she exclaimed in an indifferent tone after he ceased, meanwhile stirring the fire so that the bright sparks flew out:

"Oh, no, indeed! How silly! Don't think of going to the mountain now after such a trifle! On such a dark night, too, when the ghosts are abroad and the road is full of wolves!" As she spoke these last words, she emphasized them so that Alonso could not fail to understand her bitter irony.

As though mechanically, he arose, passed his hand over his forehead as though to dispel the fear he felt mentally, but not in his heart, and in a firm tone he said, addressing the beautiful girl, who was still amusing herself by stirring the fire on the hearth:

"Farewell, Beatriz, farewell! If I return, it will be soon."

"Alonso, Alonso," she said, turning around rapidly; but when she desired to detain him, or appeared to do so, the young man had already disappeared.

Soon after, the sound of his horse's hoofs was heard as he galloped off. The proud beauty, with a radiant look of gratified vanity lighting up her face, listened attentively to the sound until it died away, though the church bells kept on their lugubrious tolling.

An hour, two, and three, elapsed, and midnight struck as Beatriz retired to her oratory; but Alonso had not returned yet, though he had had plenty of time to go and come back.

"Perhaps he was afraid!" the young girl exclaimed, closing her prayer-book, after vainly endeavoring to murmur some of the prayers the church dedicates to All Souls' Day, for the spirits of those that have passed away.

After putting out the lamp, and drawing the silk curtains around her bed, she fell asleep. But her sleep was restless and uneasy.

The postern clock struck twelve, and Beatriz could hear its slow, sad strokes, and half opened her eyes. She thought that she had heard some one call her at the same time, in a faint, suffering accent. The wind still moaned and shook the casement.

"It must be the wind," she said, putting her hand to her heart and trying to calm herself. But her heart kept on

beating wildly. The doors of the oratory creaked noisily on their hinges. First one, and then all the doors that opened into her apartment, were opened and closed with a harsh, sad sound, like a deep groan, setting her nerves on edge.

Then a silence ensued, a silence full of strange sounds, the silence of midnight. There was a dull murmur of distant water, the barking of dogs in the distance, confused tones, unintelligible words, and echoes of footsteps coming and going. Then followed the rustling of trailing garments, half-suppressed sighs, and the labored breathing which one feels, with involuntary shudders, announces the presence of something that cannot be seen, though its approach is felt in the darkness.

Beatriz tremblingly thrust her head out from the curtains, and listened for a moment. She could hear many strange sounds, but, passing her hand over her brow, she listened again, but all was now still and quiet.

Her pupils were dilated and she seemed to see shapes moving around all over the room; but as she fixed her eyes more closely, she perceived that the darkness was impenetrable and it was due to her imagination.

"Bah," she said, resting her lovely head again on the pillow, "can I be as timid as those poor souls, whose hearts beat with terror under their armor on hearing some ghost story?"

So, closing her eyes, she tried to go to sleep, but in vain did she endeavor to calm herself. She again started up, pale, uneasy, and more terrified than ever.

This time it was no illusion, the brocade *portières* over the door had rustled as they were pushed aside, and she could hear heavy footsteps on the carpet. The sound they made was dull and almost imperceptible, but continuous, and as they moved along she could hear something creaking, like dry wood or bones. The footfalls drew nearer and nearer, and the prayer desk near her bed moved. Beatriz uttered a sharp cry, and, burying herself under the clothes, hid her head and held her breath.

The wind beat against the casement; while the monotonous flow of the fountain could be heard from afar, and the barking of dogs, as well as the church bells of Soria, some near, some farther off, while they sadly tolled for the dead.

Thus the night passed on, and to Beatriz it seemed as

though it would never come to an end. Finally, the first faint rays of dawn lighted up the sky, and she opened her eyes and recovered her self-possession.

After a sleepless night of terror, how beautiful seems the bright, clear morning light!

She drew back the curtains of her bed, and was about to laugh at her terror of the previous night, when suddenly a cold perspiration broke out on her forehead, her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and a deadly pallor overspread her cheeks; for on her prayer desk she beheld *the blue ribbon stained with blood*, the blue ribbon Alonso had gone in quest of.

When the frightened attendants rushed in to inform her of the death of Alonso—the first-born of the count of Alardiel—whose body, partly devoured by the wolves, had been found on the Spirits' Mountain, they found Beatriz motionless and rigid, clinging with both hands to the ebony bed-posts, her eyes starting from their sockets, her mouth half opened, her lips white, and her body cold and stiff, for she was dead!

Beatriz had died of fright!

They say that, some time after this event took place, a huntsman, who had lost his way, and been obliged to pass All Souls' Eve on the Spirits' Mountain, told, on the day before he died, of some of the horrible sights he had seen there. Among other things he said that he had seen the fleshless bodies of the ancient Knights Templar, and the Soria noblemen, that were buried in the chapel, on the stroke of twelve, arise from their graves with a terrible clamor; and, mounted on their skeleton steeds, wildly pursue a beautiful woman, who—pale, with dishevelled locks, and her feet bare and bleeding—was roaming around the unfortunate Alonso's tomb with wild and fearful cries.

BELLAMY

BY JAMES PAYN

In the absence of his master, an unscrupulous butler lets his employer's house to a young actress and her mother. A fortune-hunting actor—whom they suppose to be a count—mistakes the young woman for an heiress ; and in the course of their mutual efforts to entrap one another, both fall in love and are unable to part when the exposure is made. Copyright, 1892, by the Authors' Alliance.

Mr. Pullen was a rich man. He had made his money in California mines, and had come to London to spend it. He had worked the pick with his own hands—a circumstance which had caused him to be excluded from the sensitive "society" of his country. But London cares nothing for these matters. It takes people, both in a good and an ill sense, for what they are worth, and asks no questions about either their relatives or their antecedents. It welcomed Mr. Pullen because he was a hospitable fellow, and Mrs. Pullen because she was good natured and took so kindly to the prosperity that had befallen her. If it had been told by any mischievous person that Mr. Pullen had been a practical miner, it would probably have said that it was an argument in favor of early marriages, and, if it had known better, would not have cared.

Indeed, though their old neighbors may have "fought shy" of this excellent couple, we acknowledged their merits, and had no objection, so long as it was not at home, to cultivate or at all events make use of their acquaintance. Hence, it happened that when I got my first clerkship at Messrs. Bullion and Ingots, I got an introduction from my people to the Pullens in London. We believed—and they even believed themselves—that they were in London, but the fact was that, though their residence could hardly be called suburban, they were not quite in what is humorously termed "the village." They were a good way off from my lodging, in King Street, St. James, and I did not often take advantage of their hospitality, though it was generously tendered. The people one met at their dinner table were like themselves, middle-aged, and not much to my youthful mind. I think they were financial people with whom Mr. Pullen had commercial relations, and they talked of matters I did not understand. If there had been daughters in the family it would doubtless have

been different, and I should have joined the lawn-tennis parties I often saw playing in the public gardens at the back of Vigo Square; but there were no young people to attract me.

Moreover, I must honestly add there was another reason which disinclined me to much intimacy with the Pullens, or rather another cause, for it could hardly be called a reason; it was Bellamy, their butler. To those who have not read *David Copperfield*, it may seem incredible that any young gentleman should be made uncomfortable by somebody else's butler; but then I was very young, and Bellamy made me know it. He was solemn, sedate, and intensely respectable; one has heard of butlers who looked like bishops, but this one looked like an archbishop. He had been recommended to the Pullens on their arrival in town, and been with them ever since. Mrs. Pullen once described him to me as a "perfect treasure," but I think she was secretly afraid of him, and I am quite sure her husband was, though he tried to persuade himself that he was actuated by love and not fear. On our first acquaintance I thought that perhaps Bellamy had found out that his master had been a miner, and thereby got the upper hand of him. His former places had been (or he said they had been) in great establishments with persons of title, and I believe it was that absurd circumstance which mainly weighed with the simple couple, and established the man's authority in the household. He ruled it, not indeed with a rod of iron, but as it were with a pastoral staff. There was an unctuous dignity about him which would have adorned the very highest ecclesiastical position. But what I objected to was what, in those salad days, I called his infernal patronage. He made me feel so very, very young, and, when I resented it, made me feel younger. I have known him at a dinner party give me a wineglass less than other people; it may have been an accident, but I firmly believed it to be a hint not to mix my liquors; and once when I looked in at luncheon time he omitted to give me a napkin, as though I were not an adult. I am ashamed to say that Bellamy was certainly "a cause," as old Burton calls it, why my visits to the Pullens were so few and far between.

It was with some feeling of penitence and remorse, indeed, that after a very long interval I started one September afternoon to call in Vigo Square. I knew I ought to have done so any time within the last two months, and also that I was

doing it then because almost all my other friends were out of town, and I could not afford to be so particular as at other times in my choice of hospitalities. A good dinner at old Pullen's, even though Bellamy might reproach me from the sideboard with my youth and inexperience, was better than dining alone at a restaurant, for club I had none.

Imagine, then, how my conscience smote me when I drew nigh that hospitable door to find a hearse and a couple of mourning carriages before it! Either poor Pullen or his wife (for, as I have said, they had no family) were evidently about to be taken to their long home. Indeed, even while I looked, the coffin was brought out, and after it was borne away, I saw Bellamy in the portico, deeply but respectably affected, and waving a farewell blessing to the lamented remains. I was not more uncharitable than most men of my age (with whom cynicism is only popular because they think it is a sign of maturity), but the reflection did strike me that I had never seen a more hypocritical-looking scoundrel in my life. As to asking him any question in connection with the mournful occasion, it never entered my mind to do so; it would have seemed a wrong to the memory of either host or hostess, and I came away without knowing which of them had departed, though with sincere sorrow for the event itself.

In the papers I could find nothing about it, and we had no common friends, so there was nothing for it but to wait a decent interval and then call with "kind inquiries." This dutiful attention was put a stop to in a very unexpected manner, in a fortnight afterward, by my meeting Pullen himself in the city. "It must have been his poor wife, then," was my first thought, and yet, though he looked less beaming than usual, he was scarcely so cast down as a devoted husband who had so recently become a widower ought to have been, and, moreover, he was not in mourning. On catching sight of me, he smiled rather feebly (or as I thought coldly, as well he might, considering my long neglect of him), and exclaimed: "Why, you are quite a stranger. How long is it since you were at Vigo Square?"

It was really more than three months since I had crossed his threshold; but I had been to the square, as I have said; and I thought it best to rest my excuses at once upon a solid basis.

"The fact is, my dear Mr. Pullen, I did get last month so

far as your house, but under the circumstances—it was on the 18th” (he would surely remember the date, I thought to myself)—“I did not, of course, go in.”

“And why should you not have gone in?” he inquired airily. “Glad to see you, I am sure, at any time.”

“But on so melancholy an occasion—a domestic calamity, my dear sir.”

“What the deuce do you mean? I have had no domestic calamity.”

I thought this very cruel, and, indeed, brutal of old Pullen; for his wife had been a very nice person, and he had always seemed to be very fond of her.

“Well, I don’t know what you call it; but I saw the hearse at your door, and the body brought out and put into it.”

“You did, did you?” he said, looking very grave and earnest. “You saw that at my house, did you?”

“Most certainly I did.”

“Indeed?” He looked very thoughtful and depressed, like one who has received worse news than he is prepared for. “Well, my young friend, be so good as not to say anything about it till you hear from me.” He shook my hand with nervous energy, and hurried away.

I had wronged the old fellow; it was evident that so far from being unmoved by the calamity that had befallen him, it had unhinged his mind. Otherwise he could never have doubted what I had told him of the 18th of September, and begged me, almost in the same breath, to keep it a secret.

Among the acquaintances which I had made in London was that of Frank Baxter. He lacked only the talent to become a notable actor. That deficiency was fatal, of course; and it seemed a pity, because he was ambitious and handsome. These qualifications were three-fourths enough, we will say, to command success on the stage, but, alas! the missing quarter consisted of mimetic ability, and of that he had not a particle. He roomed next to me, and we became somewhat intimate. He told me of his arduous practice as an amateur actor, and how the injudicious applause of his friends had befooled him into the belief that a great professional career was possible to him. He told me also of his failure under the test conditions of a rôle in a regular drama before a regular audience. He said that the manager had

engaged him to enact a not very important yet aristocratic young lover, and, looking at his fine personal appearance and bearing, I could readily understand why his application for the employment had been successful, in spite of the fact that he was a novice. But his suitable aspect had not availed him much, in the absence of all facility in acting, and he had dropped, after one week of fruitless endeavor to improve, his performance down into assignments to "utility" parts. For this comparatively ignoble service he received only three pounds a week. He was living snugly, not to say meanly, on that scant income when he and I fell in with each other. His outward man gave no sign of inward trouble, however, for his wardrobe was still excellent, and his aristocratic air was unimpaired.

"It was while in a state of dejection, old fellow," said Frank to me, one day, "that I made up my mind to become a rascal—a fortune hunter—a what you call in America 'confidence man.' Oh, I did, indeed. Of course, I can urge that it was a sudden and powerful temptation that I yielded to, but the fact that I did yield stands against me. This is the way it happened. Being hard up awhile ago, I was glad one day to get a chance to sing and recite at a private house. It was no great affair, else my small talent wouldn't have been satisfactory. The young lady who played a piano accompaniment to my feeble songs was a Miss Pullen—a Miss Polly Pullen. Do you know her?"

An exclamation of surprise on my part had caused Frank to ask the question. The name of Pullen had caught my ear on account of my acquaintance with the Pullens of Vigo Square; but, as I knew that they had no daughter, and had no relatives in England, I concluded at once that I didn't, and couldn't, know a Miss Pullen.

"It's your misfortune that you don't know her," Frank resumed, "and it is my misfortune that I do. Listen. She was the gentlest, sweetest, loveliest creature you can imagine. I try to think it was partly love at first sight, and not altogether diabolical scoundrelism, that made me deceive her. Yes, I did deceive her. This is the way it came to pass. She overheard somebody utter the name of Count d'Arcey. You've heard of him? The French nobleman who would be wealthy if he could cash up his ancestral richness of lineage, perhaps; who is poor of pocket because no such financial op-

eration is possible. However, he has relatives with fortunes, and I believe they make a sufficient allowance to him to enable him to live in idleness. Now, by some accident, Miss Pullen thought the name was addressed to me. By a strange sequence to that accident, she was led to believe that I was Count d'Arcey. Now, my dear boy, I ask you to believe that I had at the time no deliberate intention to profit by the mistake further than to bask, temporarily, in the sunshine of that dear girl's smile. I only knew her on that occasion as Miss Martin, an American, and I assumed that she was a guest. But before the evening was over she told me that she was a paid entertainer. I shouldn't have known it, for her piano-playing and her singing, although pretty good, were no better than one comes across in drawing-rooms often. Why, oh, why was I not correspondingly frank? Why didn't I tell her that I was only Frank Baxter, a no-account actor, earning a fee of three pounds? Because I was in love with her, and I feared that to tell her the truth would disenchant her. So I let her go on under the misapprehension that I was Count d'Arcey. When we bade each other good-night, I audaciously begged the privilege of further acquaintance. What was the use of being a Count d'Arcey if I wasn't to obtrude myself on a pretty professional vocalist when I chose to? But she repulsed my advances, kindly but firmly. She wouldn't give me her address, and she deprecated any informality or precipitancy of acquaintance. At length, being persistently pressed, she admitted that she might be at the Academy picture show on a certain afternoon a week later."

"Did you meet her there?" I asked of Frank.

"Do two and two make four?" he responded.

"In this case," said I, "probably one and one will make one."

"I thought it would, and it did," said Frank ruefully, "but I went to the picture show, and soon came across Miss Pullen. She was accompanied by her mother, who neither frowned nor smiled on our renewal of acquaintance, which ripened rapidly, I assure you. Why, Polly and I were lovers at once. We looked at the pictures two or three hours, without really seeing them, and at parting she said—shyly yet alluringly—that I might call on her at her home in Vigo Square."

"Frank Baxter," I interrupted, "what are you saying? I know the Pullens of Vigo Square."

"And what are they?"

"A millionaire family from America."

"So I soon learned. I was astonished, when I paid my first visit, to find myself in a luxurious residence. Then, seeing curiosity depicted in my face, Polly explained that she wasn't a professional singer, as she had mischievously led me to believe, but an only daughter of the Pullens. In short, she was a great American heiress. If you know the Pullens, you must know her."

"I never heard of a daughter," I insisted; but Frank described the house unmistakably. He said that Mr. Pullen had gone to the Continent, leaving his wife and daughter in the charge of a trusty butler. I exclaimed, "Bellamy!"

"Bellamy," my friend echoed. "Yes—an impressive creature. Why, one day I found him instructing the ladies. Yes—actually—he stood before Mrs. and Miss Pullen, who sat almost meekly in their chairs, and was delivering something that, judging by the few words I heard, was a lecture on American pronunciation and manners. Of course he stopped instantly I entered, and all three seemed a bit flustered. I didn't like Bellamy."

Impulsively I grasped Frank's hand and shook it warmly.

"But I don't deserve to hold an honest hand, old man," he said. "I never confessed to Polly that I wasn't any Count d'Arcey, that I was an impostor. I went on with a rapid courtship, and in a week we were engaged to be married. I suggested an immediate wedding; she assented. It was to have been a private, quiet affair. Bellamy managed it. We were not even to wait until Mr. Pullen returned. A brief ceremony at the house was to have been followed by a short visit to Paris. You're going to ask how I expected to escape an exposure of my false pretence. I didn't know. All was a whisk and a whirl. I loved Polly—madly. I loved her fortune, too—no use denying that. Really, I believe it was Bellamy that precipitated things. Poor Mrs. Pullen! She seemed to be clay moulded by his hands. Ah! she is clay now, indeed. She's dead."

"Dead!" I ejaculated; and then I added: "Yes, I know; I happened to see her brought out of the house in a coffin."

"She died very suddenly," Frank continued. "A quiet funeral was held. Bellamy managed that too."

"Did Mr. Pullen seem deeply grieved?"

"He wasn't there."

"Didn't even come home to attend his wife's funeral? The hard-hearted old stone!"

"Bellamy got a telegram from Mr. Pullen, I believe, telling him not to delay the burial—that he couldn't possibly come. Of course that struck me as odd. But I had something else to think of. Polly was grief-stricken. After the funeral, she pressed a sealed letter into my hand, and, between sobs, conjured me not to open it until I had reached my own lodging. Here it is."

Frank showed me the note, which read as follows: "We cannot marry. I have not the heart to write more than that our engagement is broken, and that we must not meet again."

Frank took the missive back, kissed it tenderly, and said: "Of course she had discovered the truth about me somehow. Oh, Jeremy Diddler that I am! I deserved to lose her."

"Did you never go to Vigo Square again?"

"To what purpose? No, I submit to my punishment. That's all."

It was only the next day after I heard Frank Baxter's narrative, and a week after my street meeting with Mr. Pullen, that the millionaire invited me to dine in Vigo Square. I accepted the invitation out of pity for the lonely widower—he had written, "You will excuse there being no other guest"—more than from natural inclination; the house had never been very attractive to me, and without its kindly hostess I felt it would be less so than ever.

But if dinners in Vigo Square had been rather dull, it was fated that this one should restore the average in the way of sensation. In the first place it was rather a shock, though an agreeable one, to have the door opened for me by a strange man-servant. For the life of me, being so young and emotional, I could not help saying, "Why, where is Bellamy?" To which the man replied with polite regret, "I have only been here a few days, sir, and don't know the gentleman." It seemed strange that anybody should have been in that house, if only for a few minutes, and not have known Bellamy. In the drawing-room another shock, also agreeable, but more violent, awaited me in the person of Mrs. Pullen, alive and well.

"What a long time it is since we have seen you!" she said.

I did not say how much longer I had expected our separa-

tion to last, for I was too frightened at the moment to say anything.

"One might have been dead and buried," she added, with a reproachful smile, "without your knowing it." She might, indeed. "But you did come, though you did not call, did you not?" she added in a more forgiving tone, and this time she laughed outright in a very queer and hysterical way.

What could be the meaning of it all? She could not have gone out of her mind because her husband had not been buried on the 18th, but it was possible that she had lost some other relative upon that fatal day.

It was a great relief to me when Pullen joined us. He looked graver than usual, but not so distressed as when I had last seen him, and I noticed that he was more affectionate to his wife even than usual, as though she were in need of moral support. We three sat down to an excellent dinner (where I had my proper allowance of wineglasses and a napkin), and I enjoyed it all the more that Bellamy was not there to patronize me, and convey his pity for my youth and innocence in his every action; but of course I missed him, as one misses other things which one does not regret. If a dinner in Vigo Square without him was not like Hamlet without the prince, it was at least like Hamlet without the king; his Majesty's absence was most discernible. When the desert had been put on the table, and the new man withdrawn, I could no longer restrain my curiosity.

"And what," I inquired, "my dear Mrs. Pullen, has become of your excellent Bellamy?" It was the husband who answered.

"Bellamy was kicked out," said Mr. Pullen, "and I did it."

Mr. Pullen swelled perceptibly with pride at the mention of his achievement; still, he was a smallish man, while Bellamy was a big one, and I suppose my face expressed surprise as well as delight.

"Don't be hard upon him. I mean upon my husband," said Mrs. Pullen in a gentle, pleading voice. "His confidence has been misplaced and abused. I know you never liked Bellamy; our sense of loss, the breaking down of our belief in him, will be unintelligible to you."

I looked at my three wineglasses in doubt as to what reply I ought to return; I looked at my napkin, and felt sure in what direction duty pointed.

"My opinion of that man, my dear madam, was a very bad one," I said.

"I know it," she answered quietly; "we should therefore not say anything to you against him now, but that we owe it to you to tell you all, since it is thanks to you that his wrongdoing has been revealed to us."

Thanks to me? I was glad to hear it; it seemed a very just sort of "Nemesis" if it had happened so, but I could not conceive how it had happened, and I said so.

"Well, my dear husband and I had, as you know, the greatest confidence in Bellamy. We would have intrusted him with untold gold, and, in fact, did intrust him with what was its equivalent; and I am bound to say that we never missed anything—not a silver spoon."

"Then the man was at least honest," I said, rather disappointed.

"Not at all," she answered quietly. "He was only honest, I am afraid, in small things to cover his knavery in great ones."

"Risked a sprat to catch a herring," observed Mr. Pullen, who, so far as proverbs went, was quite a Solomon.

"Yes; he so imposed upon us that when we went abroad this summer we left this house for more than three months entirely in his hands; never asked any one even to look in to see how matters were going on. The other servants were as much under his control—and, indeed, much more so—as under our own; and we felt quite secure. Everything was forwarded to us with the greatest regularity."

"A more methodical man I never knew," interpolated Mr. Pullen. "He even sent us the circulars. Surplusage is no error."

"And when we came back," continued my hostess, "everything looked just as it should be. Bellamy seemed charmed to see us, gave an excellent character of the servants, and had been so economical with the coals that we wondered how it had been managed."

"Well we might," put in the old gentleman, "for there were more coals than when we went away."

"Good gracious! how could that be?" I inquired.

"How, indeed? That was the first thing that excited our suspicions," said Mrs. Pullen.

So it seemed that surplusage was an error.

"Somehow or other, I don't know how it was, but we got

the impression that somebody had been in the house while we had been away. There was no more evidence of it than of the existence of a ghost, but we couldn't shake ourselves free of it. If they were Bellamy's friends, we felt that they must have been quite respectable; but it was not nice to suspect that even Bellamy's friends had been using our house and sleeping in our beds, was it?"

"It certainly was not," I assented; "but why did you not speak to him on the matter?"

"Well, you see, my husband felt it rather a delicate subject to broach—to Bellamy. And he tried to hope for the best—till he met you in the city and you spoke to him of the funeral at our house. There ought not to have been any funeral, you know."

"Still, they are things you can't help, and which will occur," I remarked.

"Yes, yes, but you don't understand; when you told my husband that, he made inquiries of the neighbors. We have always thought it so nice that one's neighbors in London never trouble themselves about one, as they do in the country; but sometimes this works inconveniently. They had seen the funeral, and one or two of them had even been so good as to pull down their blinds, thinking it was one of us; but they had thought no more about it afterward on finding that the house was let."

"The house let? Do you mean that your house was let?"

"Yes, that is just how it was. Bellamy had let it furnished."

"All would have been well for poor Bellamy," observed her husband, "but for the misfortune of his tenant—or, as it should have been, our tenant—dying, as it were, upon his hands. A circumstance of that kind, in so short a lease, never entered into his calculations. There was only just time to bury the woman respectably—get things into proper order—before we got home. He must have been very much hurried and put about."

"You have had no scruple about sending him to jail, I do hope," I said. "A man who has abused your confidence so infamously" (I might have added, "and insulted your guest," for I felt it) "deserves no mercy."

Mrs. Pullen held up her hands in horror. "Send Bellamy to jail! Of course we could never do that. We have had

to part with him. But we should be sorry indeed if his future should be wrecked by a single act of—of——”

“Miscalculation,” murmured her husband.

“Just so. That is why we have invited you, my dear young friend, here alone, to beg that, so long as the revelation can do him any injury, you will say nothing to anybody about Bellamy’s mis—well, his letting our house for us.”

I departed from that dinner in Vigo Square without having said a word about Polly Pullen or Frank Baxter, or of my determination to constitute myself an amateur detective. All the questions I put to them was, “Where is Bellamy?” They did not know. A week of hard work enabled me to find him. He was out of a place still, but that fact did not relax his pompous dignity.

“Look here, you old humbug,” I said severely, “where’s the young lady you imposed upon my friend, Count d’Arcey, as Miss Pullen, an American heiress?”

“She wasn’t a lady,” he retorted, falling into the trap I had set for him.

“And she wasn’t an heiress.”

“I’ll say nothing about her. I don’t know anything. She and her mother were tenants. That’s all I know of them.”

Instantly I realized how poor a detective I was, for I was not prepared to cope with this master of the art of reticence. But I struck out with a sudden thought, and hit the mark.

“If you didn’t incite the young lady to pass herself off for an American,” I asked, “how did it happen that the count caught you one day teaching her and her mother how to imitate the American accent?”

Bellamy was struck, as I could see, although the wince was all inside. Success made me bold.

“Bellamy,” I resumed, as I took from my pocket a folded mercantile paper that chanced to be there, “I will not serve a warrant for your arrest on a charge of conspiracy to swindle if you tell me the whole truth.”

The fat of the man began to quiver with fright.

“Now, the young lady—who is she?”

“Miss Polly Rowsby.”

“What is she?”

“An actress in a small way, sir.”

“So you concocted the scheme to entrap Count d’Arcey

into a marriage, and then let him out of the *mésalliance* for a good round sum?"

I was guessing the truth, it seemed.

"I was as much taken in as anybody," Bellamy whined. "I had to pay rent to the Pullens, sir—out of my own pocket—when they found out that there'd been somebody in the house. That came of Mrs. Rowsby dying all of a sudden. Then Miss Rowsby bolted the track, sir. She wasn't at all what I'd supposed her."

"And what had you supposed her to be?"

"A fly young woman, sir. Her mother said as much. 'Twas with the old one I bargained, you know."

"Yes, I know," and this time guessing was easy. "The young lady is beyond reproach, except that she fell genuinely in love with the count, and permitted herself to be led into the game by you and her mother; but in her bereavement she repented of her purpose, and refused to deceive your victim further."

Bellamy assented with a slump of a bow that amounted to a collapse, in which state I left him.

My next step was to find Miss Rowsby. Having done that, I got them together.

"Confess to her," I said to Frank; and he told her who and what he was.

"Confess to him," I said to Polly; and she told him who and what she was.

They dropped simultaneously on their knees to beg pardon. Neither had been enough worse than the other to warrant recrimination, and neither was wicked enough to be unforgivable. Besides, they were deeply in love. They will marry in a month, and seek their fortunes on the American stage.

ETCHING: THE CORNER OF FATE**ROBERT YULEE TOOMBS**

Tells of a weary traveller on the road of Life and his resting-place by the wayside. As his Past suddenly appears before him, he rushes out in idle pursuit and passes "The Corner of Fate."

The footsore traveller paused at the widow's door to beg a glass of milk. Then he sat upon the steps. Back along the way he had come, a hundred yards from the doorway, the road turned sharply around a clump of green trees; in the other direction it was suddenly hidden behind a great rock.

Back beyond the green trees—a long, long way back—he travelled in fancy over weary roads haunted with bitter memories, taunting remorse, and heartaches. Such was his Past.

Before him towered the great rock, and this was his Present. Beyond this stone's frowning face lay his Future, hidden, and without promise.

He abode with the widow and her daughter, and as the years passed became as a son to her; for the bright, playful maiden who brought him that first glass of milk grew into womanhood and into his heart, and seemed to live only to love him as he loved her.

He had never passed that frowning stone corner, down the road, and he rarely retraced the clouded Past back beyond the green trees. He was content in the narrow presence with the widow's daughter, soon to become his wife.

A carriage came from beyond the trees one day, as he sat upon the steps. A man and a woman were in it, and a child between them—a fair, golden-haired, blue-eyed girl. With a wild cry of pain he dashed with bared head along the road, half-hidden in the dust raised by the carriage wheels.

"See, papa," cried the child, clapping her hands; "a crazy man is chasing us." With pallid face and tear-dimmed eyes the mother sat silent. She, too, was retracing a Past beyond the trees—a Past haunted with remorse and bitter memories.

The carriage soon passed from view, but he still followed it. Beyond the frowning stone's face, onward he rushed, with torn and bruised feet, under a spell that had ruined his youth, and now fell a death blight upon his middle age.

Beside the road they found him—dead—with his drawn, white face and glassy eyes set along the way she had gone.

THE MAN FROM MARS

BY EDGAR FAWCETT

By means of a wonderful device an inhabitant of the planet Mars is landed upon the earth. A charming widow, obdurate to the pleading of all terrestrial lovers, at last becomes hopelessly enamored of this wonderful being. But, alas! he has left his heart in another world and is unable to respond. Copyright, 1891, by the Authors' Alliance.

In certain hearts love may refuse to die, and yet breed there a kind of hate. That was the way with Aubrey Stayne. His love was natural enough, and his hate could not be called unreasonable. An American by birth, he had lived many years abroad. Rich, handsome, notably intelligent, he had made in Paris the acquaintance of a woman who reigned as one of the social queens of Europe. Mme. d'Autreville was a widow, and yet scarcely past four-and-twenty when Stayne first met her. This meeting took place at a ball given by the English ambassador. It was a very brilliant affair, and the young Duchesse d'Autreville shone there amid the homage of hundreds. In spirit, Stayne found himself almost instantly at her feet. He was a great deal of an artist by temperament, and her face and figure, with their sculptural repose, enchanted him. Of course she was cold, he assured himself—glacially so. One feature alone seemed to indicate otherwise—her large eyes of drowsy brown, brooding below the lustrous curves of their lashes. But, after talking with her and feeling certain that he had wrought upon her a distinct impression, he told himself that this very coldness was an added charm. When all was said, did not this type of woman pique and fascinate him more than any other? She was proud, overbearing, even insolent, if you pleased; but did not these aggressive traits combine with the snowy loveliness of her beauty to make her winsome beyond all words? "I'm proud myself, for that matter," reflected Stayne, who was really quite the reverse, all things considered, for he came of a family distinguished three or four generations ago, and had fallen heir to a property of several million dollars. In his own country he occupied an almost exalted position, while abroad his reputed and magnified wealth was certainly no drawback. On general principles he soon found himself shrinking from the idea of marrying a woman with a title. It would be called a snobbish and cold-blooded thing by every-

body who knew him. But then, on the other hand, there was the woman behind the title. And when she married him, she would change "Madame la Duchesse" into simply "Mrs. Aubrey Stayne."

But on further investigating the subject, Stayne received the bitter tidings that this lady would make no such matrimonial change whatever. The blow to him proved a fearful one. Not that she had mercilessly fooled him, or anything of that treacherous sort. Her fault was more subtle; she had refrained from showing him her real self.

They had spent a whole month together in Nice, and he had accompanied her into the most exclusive society there. Afterward they met in Rome, and finally, just as the chestnut-trees on the Champs Elysées had begun to whiten with their pearly springtide flowerage, Paris received them both. Madame owned a magnificent hotel on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. She chose to give two sumptuous balls that season, and her dinners, as usual, were the delight of the gilded cliques. People had begun to wonder if her engagement to the young American millionaire, seen so often in her train, would not soon publicly transpire.

It was after one of those costly banquets of hers that Stayne, on a certain evening, managed to linger later than all the other guests. He remembered so perfectly, in future reflections, the small white and gold room, with its tapestries of rose-colored velvet, where this woman whom he worshipped heard his first real declaration of passion. She was leaning back in a great arm-chair, indolently fanning herself. He had thought her almost maddeningly fair that night, in her robe of black tulle, with not a single jewel on her milky arms or neck, and a long, straggling spray at her breast of eglantine in diamonds. The dinner had not been very large, but some great people had attended it, and now they had all gone away—the Russian ambassador and the Austrian princess and the English duke—and he was seated on a sort of low little divan at her side, looking up into the marble beauty of her face and telling her how it had become the dream of his life to make her his own. She hardly seemed, at times, as if she listened to him. And yet he knew that she did listen. This was her way. Perhaps in a few more moments all that splendid apathy would vanish; perhaps flame would flash out, as it were, below the melting ice of her personality.

"I recollect what you have told me," Stayne was saying. "Your marriage was a forced and loveless one; your widowhood never dealt you a pang. Since then no woman in Europe has had more suitors at her feet. Well, I am merely one of this adoring multitude. Have I the right to hope for more than these? You Frenchwomen are sometimes terribly subtle, and it may be true that I have deceived myself in dreaming you would care to link your life with my own—to share with me the fortune that I lay before you in eager gladness."

He paused, and her face remained so irresponsible that he was on the verge of cursing his own folly for having mentioned, however lightly, the fact of his personal possessions. But suddenly, to his surprise and alarm, she also spoke of them, saying with lips that appeared just to move and no more:

"It is very large—is it not?—that fortune of yours?"

"Yes," he faltered, chagrined, fearing some delicate assault of that satire with which he knew that she now and then could most effectually play.

"Tell me just how large," she went on, with the faintest flicker of a smile. "I mean in francs, not dollars. Those American dollars of yours always confuse one so."

He made an impatient movement, half rising from his seat. Surely this was satire! But he soon answered her with a sort of matter-of-fact humility.

"Really, that is enormous," she said. "You're five times richer than I am; do you know it? I congratulate you." And then the crystal chandeliers seemed to darken for Stayne while she softly added: "But that must be all. I never mean to marry again, for one potent reason. Will you believe me when I tell you that love—the kind of love women feel toward men—is in my case impossible?"

"Impossible!" he muttered.

"Yes. You should not blame me; I don't deserve blame. I suspected that perhaps you cared for me, but I was not sure you would ever confess to me that you did, and I secretly hoped that you would not. It has been easy to answer those scores of others, but you it is not so easy to answer. Good Heavens!" she pursued, with her lips parting in a smile and her eyes for a moment rivalling the scintillance of the gems on her breast, "with your face, your figure, your good man-

ners, your capable brain, and your monstrous fortune, what woman except myself would be insane enough to refuse you? And yet I do—I must. Listen,” and she slowly furled her fan, letting its closed framework rest on his coat-sleeve. “It is quite true that they compelled me to marry the late Duc d’Autreville. It is equally true that I detested him. But merely because he was my husband; for no other reason. He was not at all ill-looking, and he was not particularly old. Yet my entire married life of five years was an exquisite martyrdom. Would you have me torture myself again?” she asked; and her smile at this point became horrible to him who witnessed it. “Would you have me do so because your engines of torment can be golden ones, and studded, if you please, with precious stones?”

Stayne sprang to his feet. “I don’t understand you!” he broke out fiercely. “Or, if I do, I—I refuse to believe you!”

Mme. d’Autreville shrugged her statuesque shoulders. “I don’t understand myself,” she said. “And if you refuse to believe me, you will only be doing what I have done to myself for years. But the fact still stares me in the face.”

“Shall I tell you what that fact is?” laughed Stayne, with great bitterness. “It is some other man—some man, perhaps, whom you think beneath you and—and yet adore!”

“Ah, if only it were!” exclaimed the lady. “I would reduce myself almost to beggary if I could once say of any living man that actually, absolutely I loved him!” It occurred to her listener, as she now continued, that either complete truth dwelt in both her voice and look or else that she was deceiving with a masterly adroitness. “For life,” she hurried on, with a betrayal of excitement startlingly rare, “is, without love, like a wondrous book but half read. It often fills me with horror to think that I shall go to my grave and yet never know the chief charm and joy of living!”

“Answer me,” exclaimed Stayne, with notes of grief and command mingling in his voice: “Can it be possible, Hortense d’Autreville, that you have never seen a man whom you could love?”

“Never,” she returned.

“Not one whom you believed able to win your love?”

“Never.”

“Then you—you are willing to swear to me that you will never marry again?”

"Yes. You have no right to require that I shall so swear; but I will—I do. There, now; are you satisfied?"

"Satisfied!" he broke forth, in pain and rebuke. "As if I could be that, with the love I feel for you!" Scanning her face intently, he paused for several moments. "Then you have no ideal," he resumed, "no——"

But here she cut him short, with a quick lifting of one hand. "I have an ideal—yes," came her reply. "But I have given up all hope of ever palpably realizing it. That is my sorrow—my despair! Perhaps the ideal of which I speak is not of this world at all. Perhaps I shall some day find it beyond the bounds of death. Only, one point is clear, is undeniable: you have been far more right than you suspected in accusing me of a great coldness. Although pity, affection, and other kindlier emotions are not foreign to my spirit, I am none the less a human creature born without the power of loving as a wife must alone love to save her marriage from being mockery and shame!"

In this final admission there seemed so much piercing sincerity that, for a long time after he had hastened from Hortense d'Autreville's presence, Stayne credited every word she had spoken; but, by degrees, a certain cynic element in his disposition prevailed, with gloomy result. After all, had he not merely been the dupe of a finished coquette? Might not the romantic novelty in which Mme. d'Autreville had chosen to mantle her confession have been simply the cruelty of a barren and arid soul? Did she deserve a gleam of his compassion? More than this, was she not privately exhilarated by the anguish of which she had made him a victim? Where was the necessity of such a woman as she marrying again? Her least wish was now gratified by the amplitude of those funds which her dead spouse had bequeathed her. Every new lover prostrate at her garment's hem was a new intoxication of triumph. The world was full of just such bloodless sirens, and what she deserved was not this tribute, on his own part, of moping and weak-willed forlornness. Punishment was indeed what she deserved, and in his altered and even savage mood Stayne found himself longing for some forceful means of inflicting upon her a kind of counter-blow that she would remember till the day of her death.

He did not remain more than two or three days in Paris, but betook himself to Havre, sailing thence to America.

During the next year, while passing his time between New York and the smaller, more southerly town where he was born, Stayne not seldom deported himself in the most eccentric way. His old suavity would at times wholly leave him, and a morose curtness would take its place. Now and then he would say irrelevant things, or plunge himself into fits of silence which were the despair of his entertainers. It is true that a man of his extreme note might have behaved in a far more cavalier manner and yet received no open censure; but, as it now happened, he was forced to pay the penalty of being conspicuous. A report got into circulation that he was on the verge of dementia, if not already mad. Had not his uncle, Andreas Aubrey, died a lunatic; and was it not well known that insanity had more than once cropped out with ugly persistence in his mother's family?

A friend at last told Stayne of the hard things that were being said of him. The informant was this time a real friend, and not, as so often happens in such cases, a foe under the guise of one. Stayne knew this, and hence felt the verity of the tidings bear in upon him with full force. At first they annoyed him excessively. Then a sense of disgust beset him, and of indifference as well. His life had grown purposeless. Nearly the most enviable man in the country, he was yet one of the least contented. He said something of this sort to the friend who had brought him news of those unpleasant rumors. "You should marry," was the reply. "Select some lovely girl (there are thousands to choose from), and devote yourself to her happiness."

"Ah, true, true," murmured Stayne, stroking his mustache. "There are thousands to choose from, and that's the devil of it. They're all alike—at least to me."

"Build some colossal monument of charity, then. Dive deep into the waters of altruism."

"And bring up a clam-shell instead of a pearl," sneered Stayne. "Still," he went on, with an air much less ironical and languid, "I have always hoped to do something lastingly humanitarian before I died. The only trouble with us, who possess power to help great masses of people in this way, is the thought of what horrible maladministration may overtake our work, after we have either bestowed it upon the people or bequeathed it to them, and what hideous charlatanism and dishonesty may hereafter balk our sincerest efforts."

He soon afterward sailed away for somewhere, in a magnificent steam yacht, entirely without personal companionship other than that of sailing-master and crew. His friends held this to be another mad freak, but their verdict was doubtless tinged with envy. Stayne, who passionately loved the sea, wanted to brood in its unshared company. The impulse was not unlike that of Byron; and when we recall that this young American was, in his own style, almost as handsome as the famed English singer, and that his tastes were strongly poetic, the analogy surely does not suffer.

"The sea may tell me," he would occasionally reflect before starting—and reflect half in humorous earnest, half in sombre jest, "what sort of incentive, occupation, self-absorption my life just now really desires. Or it may tell me, on the other hand, whether grief and disappointment have indeed thrust my soul into an oubliette of that austere Bastille, *ennui*, and doomed that I shall wait there only a single summons—that of the turnkey, Death."

He had already cruised in this stately yacht of his, the *Nomad*, along numerous Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts. He now chose the Pacific, reaching it after many days of indolent sailing and after pauses at many a port, from Rio Janeiro to San Francisco, a pleasure-journey at once audacious and immense.

On the Californian shores he lingered for two or three months, and at length put forth for a kind of adventurous ocean ramble among the mighty Polynesian sweeps.

Landing at Honolulu, he spent some time there, and then struck southwestward. His yacht was meanwhile in splendid condition, his picked crew in excellent health and perfect discipline. About ten days later he reached two islands, one of which was perhaps two thousand acres in extent and inhabited by a small settlement of English traders and a few hundreds of harmless, half-civilized natives. The other island lay possibly three miles distant, and the *Nomad* had scarcely landed him on its edge before Stayne became entranced with its lonely and lovely charms. Its extent was less than half that of its near neighbor, and, doubtless because of the English trading post across the intervening channel, it was apparently quite deserted. But Stayne found there, amid a grove of rustling palms, the quaintest kind of a dwelling, which combined the primitive features of a Hawaiian

structure with a veranda and two or three tiny ceiled chambers. An American or European had evidently erected the curious edifice, and then left it here on this deserted island. Stayne at once conceived the idea of establishing himself as its latest occupant, and sent across the channel for rugs, couches, and other articles of convenience or comfort.

One afternoon he remained quite alone on the island, while the *Nomad* steamed away for the purpose of securing and transporting some heavier furniture, which the small boats could scarcely carry and which he had purchased on the previous day. For a long time he paced the hard white curve of beach, that the musical beryl sea lapped with tender and foam-rimmed surges, below craggy cliffs colored a tawny brown and overhung with blossoming vines, where the great discs of the flowers looked like peering fairy faces.

"A paradise," said Stayne to himself, and wondered how long he would stay in the odd little species of bungalow that he was furnishing. But a short while before sunset, and just as he had begun to watch for some appearance of his returning yacht, a change not wholly of the sort which is supposed to occur in paradise fell upon sky and land. One became quickly and gloomily misted over, and the other caught new tints in the emerald of its palms and umber of its rocks.

A few minutes later a terrific tropical storm had broken loose. Stayne took refuge in the little building which he had designed for his hermitage, and here he abode for nearly two hours, while javelins of lightning pierced the almost inky air and he could hear the roar of the sea like voices from a multitude of giants in mingled wrath and pain. When at last the torrents of rain had lessened, and the whole riotous turbulence was in a measure stilled, he drew near the door of his retreat. This door faced a gap in the rocks, and he now succeeded in discerning, though very vaguely, the pale stretch of sand that lay perhaps a hundred yards beyond. But he caught only fitful glimpses of it, for the billows that poured over it were no less incessant than they were mammoth. Now and then the lightning aided his vision, followed as it was by crashes of thunder that seemed to phrase awful tidings of the *Nomad* and those who manned her.

Suddenly, as a fresh blaze of flame illumined the shore, he felt certain that the lightning had just missed dealing him death; for some great dark object seemed to tumble like an

over-toppling cliff between himself and the white-lit, tempestuous sea. Then fiercer torrents of rain fell, and were driven toward the opening in such solid sheets that it needed all his might to close the door.

With strange abruptness the storm at length ceased. When Stayne reopened the door and again looked forth, masses of cloud were hurrying across a heaven in which beamed a full and golden-tinted moon. The sea, directly in front of him, still frothed angrily, but all its wild ardors were spent. Great crevices were scooped in the beach, and drenched tangles of torn-down vine invaded it, while here and there a prone palm-tree made him shudder at the hair-breadth escape of those grove-girt roofs which had so lately sheltered him. The moonlight now grew steadier, for the clouds were quite denuding the heavens in which they had so long and harshly raged. Stayne sank above his ankles, at first, in the inundated sand, as he moved forward to a certain dusky bulk which the sea laved and recoiled from, like a tiger sporting with the prey it has killed. What he presently gazed at was a nameless kind of ruin, and though jagged and splintery to a piteous degree, it oddly struck him, for a moment, as resembling a coffin. But this illusion soon vanished. He stooped and looked within the semi-shattered interior, which, for all its ruin could tell, might have been some narrow compartment of a ship. Yet while his hand rested on the broken verge of the thing, a certain chill and hardness made him aware that it was rather metallic than ligneous.

But in another moment he had forgotten everything except the fact that a human form lay stretched before his gaze. It was the form of a man, clad in some strange-made garment, not unlike that of the ancient Greeks. While stooping there in the vivid Southern moonlight and believing that he beheld a corpse, Stayne was thrilled by the realization that he had never before looked upon a being of so much facial beauty and physical grandeur.

He lifted the drooped head, whose heavy gold curls clung drenched about the wide and lordly brow. Having a flask of brandy on his person, he forced some of its contents between the hueless lips. Then he let the noble head sink backward again on what seemed a fragment of cushioned interior, and waited.

He had slight hopes of the man's resuscitation. It seemed

to him that so splendid a creature should have every chance for his life, and yet how meagre was the aid that could now be furnished him! But soon, to Stayne's amazement, a shiver passed through the recumbent frame. Presently the still face grew fairer, for its eyes unclosed. Their hue could not be seen, but their size and brilliance were a new revelation.

Two good hours later, the sailing-master of the *Nomad* found, with great joy, that his employer was safe in a room of the little island dwelling. Stayne had lighted three or four candles, and had made a bed of some shawls and rugs, where his new-found companion reclined. He briefly explained that he had sheltered the youth after having revived him, and that he knew nothing either of the refugee's nationality or the destination of his wrecked bark, since he spoke a language quite incomprehensible. The captain stared and seemed greatly struck by the stranger's personal appearance. But Stayne, who was a kind superior yet one who never tolerated familiarity, cut short all expressions of wonderment by a series of questions concerning the fate of the *Nomad*. He received the pleasant information that his yacht had sustained only a few trifling injuries owing to her strength and size, and that she was now harbored close to the island, waiting his commands.

Food and drink in abundance were soon brought to the rescued waif. He partook of them with a certain surprise and fastidiousness, keenly watched by his host. He had spoken a language which had wholly baffled his hearer, who knew a number of languages more or less well. But the accent and vibrations of his voice had appealed to Stayne with great force. Its rhythms and cadences had delighted him. But he did not understand a syllable of what they meant. He had understood, however, a certain amount of graceful and extraordinary pantomime which the virile arms and faultless face had combined to enact. And such strange thoughts and feelings had resulted from this experience, that they possibly explained his reticence and crispness toward the master of his yacht.

Four weeks of continued and private intercourse now followed on this quiet little island between Stayne and his unforeseen charge. A great tide, as it proved later, had come on the midnight after the storm, and in its recession had

washed away all traces of the curious wreckage. But Stayne was destined to learn, and with blood-curdling consternation, just what that weird fragment had represented. His discoveries on these and other like points were gradual. To make the youth comprehend his—Stayne's—language was difficult at first; but after a few days the task became marvellously easier. Marvellously, because here was an intelligence of no earthly grasp. With something that almost resembled horror and that surely was awe, Stayne found himself recoiling before mental faculties whose reach and penetration he had thus far imagined only.

Intercommunication became really facile between the two after a lapse of about four days. Then progress took a very fleet course, and actual conversation was carried on with mutual ease.

Chalco (by which name Stayne had got to know him) declared himself to be an inhabitant of the planet Mars. For many years, he stated, that world had been desirous of holding intercourse with our own. Enormous lengths of structure had been reared from a metal of peculiar lightness and suitability for purposes of building. From this same metal had been constructed the car in which he had shot, by electric potencies not explainable here, toward our comparatively adjacent orb. Electricity in Mars had reached great heights of development. This Chalco, the younger son of a powerful ruler, had been deemed almost despicable for his want of mental power. More than that, his high rank had made his love for a certain lady, held below him in the social grade, to be considered an almost treasonable offence. Chalco was in his way a pariah, and, when the tremendous problem of possible interplanetary communion had approached solution, his offer to mount the perilous car and make the audacious voyage had been received with sombre assent. The populace, in spite of his faults and youthful follies, loved him. The astronomer Golordon, though confident that his electric car would accomplish its purpose if launched at the given sidereal moment, was nevertheless a member of the royal family, and shrank from permitting so reckless an act on the part of one who stood third in succession to the throne. Yet Chalco had announced his intention either to wed the woman he loved or meet public execution. Then, suddenly, Golordon's great scheme was effected. Who would go? In the

car there was room but for one. From the largest square of Dolostria, the chief city of Mars, rang a vast cry from an assembled multitude of many thousands. "Let our young prince Chalco mount the car if he is willing," shouted the people of Dolostria.

Chalco, standing near his father, smiled and waved his hand. At this the people gave a great roar that died into a wail of pain. They admired his courage, but they loved him while deploring his deficiencies, and were fearful of his destruction. Then, amid the tumult, Chalco turned toward his aged and royal father. "You know," he said, "that I love only one woman and shall love only her till my death. Yet you assert that if I wed her I must die."

"Yes," came the answer. "The son of royalty cannot wed among the common people."

Then Chalco, notwithstanding that he was believed so slight and inferior of capacity, pleaded strongly against this decree. Was not royalty a mere name now among this glorious people, who were empowered with every right of freedom? Why not shake precedent to its rotten foundations? Here in this mighty park where they stood, the statues of dead patriots, heroes, reformers, poets, all spoke of how centuries of tyranny had wrought popular redemption. Kingship was now but a name. "I will mount the car," he said to his father, "if you refuse me Alaria. I have the first claim to do so after the heir apparent, my brother, who refuses."

But the old king shook his head. And then Chalco descended from his father's side and went down among the populace and stretched out his hands to Alaria, who sprang toward him. He kissed the girl on the lips and put his arms about her, and they all knew it was a kiss of farewell; and, as Alaria was drawn fainting from his embrace, a shout that might almost have reached earth itself rose from the gathered throngs. Then Chalco, who was less beautiful (as he alleged) than countless other Martial men, and who had far less wit than they, and who did not understand the wondrous knowledge of his kinsman Golordon, fabricator of the aerial car, avowed himself ready for the daring and mystic voyage. He expected death, though they told him that Golordon was right and that his chances of reaching earth were many, and that the keen Martial telescopes had made it almost certain a race dwelt on the other planet, civilized enough to welcome

him and to effect his safe return. Within the car was atmosphere enough to last him on his journey, which would, after all, be of inappreciable brevity. He had only to turn a certain knob, when once within the sealed chamber, and he would dart through space at the rate of millions of miles a second. Golordon had discovered a new law of electricity, and had already applied it to the satisfaction of all the famed Dolostrian academies. A single peril threatened him on reaching earth, and that was the hostile electricity of a thunderstorm. If ordinary lightning were in the terrestrial air, it would shatter the car by its negative and combative forces.

Chalco, with despair in his heart but a brave smile on his lips, bounded up the ladder that led to the platform where the aeronautic ship floated, like a great tethered bird. He kissed his hand to the multitude, which gazed up at him with tears and murmurs of admiration. Yet there were some among them who on our planet would be called "rationalists" and "agnostics," and these deplored his going. Far better, they said, to send a man of science than this young ignorant prince, who had nothing save his courage to recommend him in so important a venture, and whose intent was well known to have been suicidal because his marriage with the girl Alaria had met paternal veto.

In truth, Chalco cared little for his life. This contempt, mingled with the spirit of adventure, made him watch unflinchingly the final preparations. These were effected, and the car shot forth from the splendid city and became a speck in the blue firmament, soon fading to blankness.

For Chalco the voyage had been one as instantaneous as it would be to a cablegram flashed across the Atlantic, could that cablegram possess the power of thought. On reaching earth, however, there would have been no shock at all, so deft and admirable was the invention of Golordon and so neatly adapted to the laws of gravitation here. That fearful tropical thunderstorm, however, had ruined everything. The car fell shattered on the island coast, and its inmate, flung into the sea, finally reached land after some magnificent efforts at swimming and sank unconscious where Stayne had found him, in a remnant of his own demolished vessel.

Chalco's listener (there can be no doubt of this fact) at first seriously doubted him. His story was too incredible, too preposterous! And then his entire admitted ignorance

of what had been the methods of the astronomer Golordon—did not that smell of trickery and fraud? What more suspicious, too, than that all the material testimony of his native planet, testimony with which Chalco affirmed the car to have been packed, should have suffered, like that receptacle itself, complete destruction? And yet Stayne had seen a fragment of this alleged car. Moreover, to look on Chalco and listen to him was gradually, but implicitly, to believe his story.

He soon spoke with great fluency of the habits, customs, politics, and general national attainments on Mars. To Stayne it seemed impossible that he should not rank intellectually high among those whom he had left. And his beauty—how mobile, how captivating, how unparalleled it was! When the men and women on the other island saw him, they were plainly, yet pleasurably, shocked. But the women, young and old, could not keep their eyes from his face. Stayne, while watching him, thought of Tennyson's lines:

"Liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the sun
Than our man's earth."

After a while the *Nomad* brought them both to Californian shores. Chalco was in a way changed by this time. He had lost the charming and delicate air of wildness which had marked him at first. He had become, as it were, more "earthly." His new, conventional garb suited him far better than Stayne had expected. When at last he had grown able, with his almost miraculous facility, to master the English tongue, there was an element of peculiar diversion for his auditor in the regret with which he spoke of his thwarted mission.

"Golordon," he said, "supposed that you would send me back to him. He hardly doubted that in your world science had gained the same headway which it possesses in ours. He and thousands of others are now awaiting me."

"And you wish to return?" asked Stayne.

"No: I am contented here—with you."

"Chalco, you are not contented," replied Stayne, placing a hand on his shoulder. "You are secretly miserable."

"I remember Alaria," he responded, drooping his head.

"Our women are none of them so fair as this Alaria of yours?" asked Stayne, when they had been for some little

time on the Californian coast and were about to dismiss the yacht prior to travelling eastward by an inland course.

"No; they are—almost ugly to me," Chalco answered. "I do not know if you can understand."

"I do understand," said Stayne, "when I look at you and realize how you surpass all earthly men in mind and body."

Stayne at last had found something keenly to interest him. The society of Chalco was an incessant intoxication. Wherever they went together his superb physique woke admiration, delight. Stayne introduced him as "Mr. Chalcott, a relative who has spent many years among the Polynesian islands." Remembering the rumors of his own madness and the extreme improbability of Chalco's history, this course to the young American wanderer seemed much the wisest. Meanwhile a certain idea had entered Stayne's head. They lingered only a short time in New York, after reaching it. At a supper of fashionable men and women which Stayne gave in the metropolis, and at which Chalco, with his insecure yet engaging English, took the whole company by storm, a lady of taste and social distinction murmured in his ear—

"This cousin of yours is an enchantment. I have never seen so wondrously handsome a man. We women are all at his feet. But he does not care for us. That is plain. He is like a god—like some one from another sphere. It's as though he had come from another sphere and loved a woman there—or a goddess—whom he cannot forget."

"Will she have the same feeling?" thought Stayne, whose mind was concerning itself with Mme. d'Autreville.

When, a fortnight later, they reached Paris, the winter season was at its gayest height. Stayne brought his friend into the *salon* of the duchesse. She was radiantly handsome as ever, and quite as coldly so. He watched her intently as she spoke with Chalco. He saw a change creep over her manner. Suitors as usual surrounded her, but she turned to Chalco with a novel spark of interest in her brown eyes, a deepened sweetness in her frigid smile. Time went on, and soon all Paris was talking of Mme. d'Autreville's *grande passion*. She made it almost public; she seemed like a woman drunk with infatuation. Stayne often accompanied Chalco when he visited the Hôtel d'Autreville, but not always. He was secretly triumphant, yet not at all contented. One day he said to Chalco:

"You are the rage here, as they call it. And yet everybody thinks you unhappy."

"I am," was the answer.

"You desire to—return?"

"No. Why should I? She is forbidden to me."

"And Mme. d'Autreville?" pursued Stayne. "There is a woman who has never loved living man, till she looked upon you. Have you no real regard for her?"

"None."

Stayne laughed. "Go and tell her so," he said.

"I have told her so," was the reply.

Stayne started terribly. "You have!" he exclaimed. "When?"

"This morning," returned Chalco, with a toss of his poetic head. "I was in her boudoir, as you call it. She suddenly burst into tears. It was very strange. I could do nothing—nothing but smile and speak the truth. She was like a statue that melts from marble into flesh. She flung herself at my feet. Well," he finished, "I left her very unhappy and very disturbed."

During these words Stayne had felt himself growing ghastly pale. Here was his victory! Hortense d'Autreville had been conquered at last! But a sudden transport of jealousy swept over him, nevertheless, inconsistent, idle, absurd, as he clearly realized.

"You—you have been very kind and complaisant to me," he tried to say calmly, yet not knowing just what he really said. "Yes, your—your acceptance of the situation, Chalco, was goodness itself. You might have told of your origin—you might have spoken of——"

He paused in horror, for Chalco had abruptly drawn a small, keen dagger from his breast, and now thrust it into his heart. As the splendid young creature fell, self-murdered before him, Stayne sprang to his side.

"Chalco!" he shouted. "What have you done?"

"I—I was tired of it all," came the gasped answer of the dying man. "You were a true friend, but Alaria haunted me so! I—I cannot live without her, and so I die sorrowing for her!"

When the gossip and consternation of "Mr. Chalcott's" suicide were at their height, Stayne went to Hortense d'Autreville.

He found her tremulous, tortured with anguish.

"So," he said to her, "you have loved at last."

"Yes—yes," she faltered. "Why did he kill himself? You know! Tell me!"

"He loved another woman, who was lost to him forever," Stayne answered, and turned on his heel and left her.

This was the revenge of Aubrey Stayne. But it brought him no consolation. Does any revenge ever do that? As for the secret of Chalco's origin, he religiously kept it through the rest of his life. Why should he not have done so? To tell what he knew, without a shred of proof for his support, would simply have made him the jest of unpitying sceptics.

THE HAUNTED GHOST

BY E. J. GOODMAN

This is the pitiful story of an ill-used ghost. Driven forth from the castle he has faithfully haunted for years, the unfortunate wanderer is obliged, in his ghostly old age, to hunt about for a suitable ruin in which to set up his establishment. From "Atalanta."

"Will I tell ye the story of the Ballykillin ghost?" Faith, will I, your honor; but it's a mighty small matter, after all. He was a poor creature, was that same, and so's the lave o' them when you come to reckon 'em up. Sure, ghosts is nothing but shadows at all, and what harm is there in a shadow? None that I ever heard of, barrin' Pat Donovan's, that he struck with his blackthorn when he was coming home from Carrickmahon Fair, thinking it was some rascal that was following of him, and just sent his stick through Widow Mahoney's window, which cost him five shillings, worse luck, for mending the broken glass and frame.

Well, this is the truth of it, your honor. Ballykillin Castle was haunted by a ghost. . Faith, it was, for I've seen it with nobody's eyes but my own. Och! he was the ghost of a big scoundrel, he was—the "bad baronet" they called him, who betrayed his country in the time o' William of Orange, and was found dead one fine morning in his own court-yard, with a bullet through his wicked heart. Not a soul ever knew who did it; but, whoever it was, he had the blessings of all the country round; for he was a mighty great rascal, was Sir Roderick Shane.

There never was a Shane like him before or since; for they've all been gentlemen, every baronet of them. And there was no finer gentleman in Ireland than my old colonel, Sir Peter Shane, who commanded the regiment I was out with in India, before I got my discharge for being crippled in the left leg in a scrimmage with the Indians.

Bless the dear old colonel! There wasn't a boy in the regiment who wouldn't have died for him; and when he asked if there was ever a man with pluck enough to go up to the castle and see whether there was a ghost in it or not, it's ashamed of myself that I would have been if I hadn't been the first to volunteer for the job.

But I'm hurrying on a bit too fast. For you must know

that Ballykillin Castle had been shut up and left to go to waste for years upon years, all because of that murdering, thieving old ghost. And so was the lovely demesne all around it, with its oak and beech trees and shady walks all grown over with weeds and rubbish, and its pretty gardens running wild for want of a gardener. For never a soul would go near the place, and the boys would walk miles out of their way o' nights to give it a wide berth. Och! it was a pity, so it was entirely.

So Sir Peter, he says, "Here's this fine old house of mine all run to wrack and ruin because of a bit of stupid superstition;" and the brave old man would have gone himself to pass a night in the castle, to prove there was no ghost at all, only his good lady and the Miss Shanes wouldn't let him.

Well, then, when I said I would go into the castle after dark and see if there was a ghost or not, he just shook hands with me and said I was a bold lad, and if I did it he would give me and Bridget £50 to start housekeeping on when we was married. But I said I would do it for the love of him and the family, not for the money, though sure that same would come in handy for the wedding.

But Biddy, when she heard what I was after, threw her arms round my neck and held me fast, saying:

"Och! Timothy darling, sure you'll never go and do such a thing. You'll be kilt and murdered, that's what you'll be, and leave me a widow before we are married."

"Faith, no," says I; "the ghost won't hurt me, if there is one; and if there isn't, the colonel can get into the castle and live among us, and needn't be an absentee any more at all."

"But, och!" says Biddy, "if the ghost doesn't kill you, sure he'll frighten you out of your blessed wits, and it's a poor deluded lunatic that I'll have for a husband all my days."

Well, your honor, it was mighty hard work that I had to quiet the colleen, and persuade her to let me go without any more howling. And all the folks in Ballykillin, when they saw me march off to the castle with my stick and my bag of victuals over my shoulder, swore I'd never come back with my wits about me, even if I didn't leave my corpse behind.

But I'd faced the black niggers out in India, and I didn't believe there was a ghost half as ugly or vicious as the best of them. I'd heard ghost stories galore in my time, and never knew of one where anything worse happened than a

bit of a fright; and sure, thinks I, if you're not frightened what harm can come to you at all?

So I marched up to the castle with never a twitter of the heart, whistling "Finnigan's Wake" just for company's sake, and ready to face all the ghosts in the bad place or out of it. The rusty iron gates at the entrance of the demesne were hanging loose on their hinges, and the pretty lodge was all in ruins, with the creeping ivy growing over it. The road under the big trees up the avenue was all covered with weeds, and a mighty big pond that you passed lay under a sheet of nasty green stuff that had gathered on it for years.

And the castle stood out grim and gray against the blood-red sunset behind, just like the haunted houses that you see in the picture-books. But it didn't daunt me with all its queer looks; so I marched straight up to the old door, and put in the key. It wanted a twist, I tell you, to turn the key in the lock; but I soon got the door open, and then I was in the dark old hall, all as quiet as a church-yard, barring the scuttering of the rats and bats which I set flying, without "by your leave."

Then I stepped up the old staircase and, och! how it cracked and creaked under my feet; and little wonder, for it hadn't been trodden on by mortal feet for maybe a hundred years or more. And so I went on through the old rooms and galleries with never a bit of furniture in them, barring a rickety chair and a table here and there, and ragged tapestry and rusty armor on the walls. Faith! it was a pity to see such a fine place all full of nothing at all, and the sight of it put the courage into my heart to try and get the ghost out.

I went into one room after the other, illigant places with chimney-pieces all covered with figures, and ceilings painted and divided off into squares, just like a palace. But never a one had a sound window in it, for all the glass was broken and smashed as though there had been an election or a pattern fair outside. At last I came to one that was pretty weather-tight, and there I made myself snug for the night. I got in some old furniture, and broke it up for a fire in the grate, keeping a table and chair for myself to have my supper; and then I sat down and lighted my pipe and waited for the ghost.

Och! it was all nice and quiet, and the moon came out and peeped through the window as much as to say, "Tim Macar-

thy, my boy, sure I've come to keep you company." I knew I would see nothing of the ghost, if he came at all, till midnight, as that was his time to appear; so the folks said. He was as regular as the rent-collector, was that ghost, if you was to believe all you heard, and never stayed a minute after sunrise; so I thought I knew when to expect him.

Sure enough, just as the clock, far off, struck the last stroke of midnight, I heard a queer noise.

"What's that, anyhow?" I says to myself.

For it was such a sound as I never before heard in my life. It was like some poor creature groaning, worse than any of the wounded on the battle-field, with just a touch of a wail now and then like a howl at a wake, but more dismal.

"Faith!" thinks I, "the ghost is coming."

So I put myself in a genteel position, with one leg crossed over my knee, and kept my pipe in my mouth, and held my head up, so as to look becoming when the ghost appeared. There I sat and listened, and presently I heard a creaking of the boards, such as I made myself when I was coming up the old stairs.

Well, your honor, the sounds of the groaning and the creaking came nearer and nearer, and got louder and louder every minute; and if I said my heart wasn't beginning to beat a bit, sure I would be telling ye a lie. But I kept up my courage as well as I could, telling myself there was nothing to be afraid of, and that as I had come to do this job I must go through with it.

So I was as cool as the process-server when they introduced him into the river; and, by my soul, I needed to be that, when I tell you what happened next. As I live, the door just in front of me swung slowly open, bit by bit, with never a hand that I could see to set it moving; and when it was wide open, there, in the full light of the moon, stood a figure that looked just awful.

It was the ghost, sure enough. It was the shadow of the "bad baronet," Sir Roderick Shane, dressed as he was two hundred years ago, when they put a bullet into him for his behavior. He had on an elegant green coat slashed with gold lace, and under it a white frilled shirt with an ugly red stain over the left breast. There was a long wig on his head, reaching down over his shoulders, and he had knee-boots, with spurs, on his legs, and a sword by his side.

But, faith! it was not his figure, nor yet his dress, that looked so queer. It was his face, white and pasty, like that of a corpse, and his horrible dead eyes with never a bit of light in them, his bloodless lips parted and showing a row of ugly black teeth, that sent a shiver through me in spite of myself. I wasn't afraid, though—niver a bit! and I hadn't looked at him for above a minute or two before I got used to him entirely.

Well, he stood and glared at me, as I sat and looked at him, with my leg crossed over my knee, and my pipe in my mouth. I took out that last, so as I could say something civil to him; but never a limb did I move.

"Good-evening, your honor!" says I. "Sure, you must be the ghost of the bad—I beg your honor's pardon—of Sir Roderick Shane, I mean."

"Man," cried the ghost in a hollow voice, "do you dare sit there in my presence?"

"Faith," says I, "I do. Why wouldn't I?"

"Do you not know," says he, "what fearful risks you run?"

"No," says I, "I don't; and would be much obliged for particulars of the same."

"Your reason," says he, "your very life is in danger."

"Well, now," says I, "you don't say that? Sure I'd like to know how you make it out."

"At a word from me," says the ghost, "you might be driven into raving madness or drivelling idiocy. I could blast you as by a lightning-stroke, or crush you into dust."

"Indade, then," says I, "it's lucky for me you don't."

"But," says he, "I cannot long forbear."

"Can't you?" says I. "Well, then, if I may ask without offence, how long will you be forbearing?"

"Until to-morrow night," says he. "You have intruded here, no doubt, in ignorance. Begone at once, and I will spare you; but never again presume to trespass on my domain."

Well, the ghost talking in this way of the old colonel's property as his domain, began to get my blood up. But I kept as cool as I could, and said: "Sure it's very good of your honor to let me off so easy; but I ask your pardon if I say that this is not your domain at all. It used to be, I allow; but it belongs now to my old colonel Sir Peter Shane, God bless him!—and as I am here under his orders, here I mean to stay."

"Fool!" cried the ghost, and then he gave one of his dismal groans.

This was more than I could put up with, even from the ghost of one of the quality.

"Now, look here, ghost," says I. "Don't you begin of calling names, because two can play at that game, and I know the trick of it. Sure, I've as good a right to be here as you have, and better. Indeed, you've no business to be here at all. The castle don't belong to you now, and you've kept all decent folk out of it ever since you got that piece of lead between your ribs. Why don't you keep quiet and easy in your comfortable grave, and leave the old place alone?"

"How dare you address me thus?" says the ghost. "You—a mean, common soldier! dare you speak to me like this—to me, a gentleman, the head of an ancient house, to whom you might, in days gone by, have been the basest menial in his service?"

This wasn't civil, but I kept my temper.

"Yes, ghost," says I, "that's right enough. All that might have been long ago, before you was done for; but, sure, times has changed since then, and I dare do a deal now that would have been a liberty once."

"Vile dog!" said the ghost, "I will parley with you no longer. But, once more, beware how you trespass here again. If I discover you within these walls to-morrow night your doom is death. Farewell!"

"A good-night to your honor," says I, getting up for the first time, so as to be a bit civil now he was departing. Then I heard him go creaking and groaning along the passage till the sound of him was lost in the distance.

I couldn't help bursting out laughing. I slapped my thigh and says to myself: "Faith! I've had the best of him this time, anyhow."

Well, I thought I would see no more of him that night, so I just curled myself up on the big seat in the window, and soon was fast asleep.

Och! murder! you should have seen the folks when I walked through the village of Ballykillin the next morning. If I'd have been a ghost myself, they couldn't have looked more scared, and it was some time before they would come near me or touch me. But Biddy came running out, and threw her arms around me in the street before all the people.

"Och! Tim darlin'," she says, "and have you come back alive and left none of your wits behind you? Och, praise be to the saints for this mercy! But don't go near the bad place again; don't, Tim darlin'."

Then she went on to ask if I had seen the ghost, and so did all the neighbors and the colonel himself. But niver a word would I tell them of what I had seen. I kept my mouth shut till the next night, and after that, too, and just an hour or so before midnight, started off for the castle again.

I made myself snug once more in that room with the sound window, and waited for the ghost. It struck midnight at last, and I listened for the groanings and creakings, but niver a sound could I hear.

"Well," I says to myself, "the ghost's getting into bad habits. I shall have to tell him to keep better time."

One o'clock came, and still there wasn't the ghost of a ghost.

"What's up now, I wonder?" says I. "Sure, he hasn't cleared out of this already. Perhaps he's gone to get some other ghost to come and help to turn me out, and can't find one at liberty. Well, I'll give him till sunrise, anyhow."

But the sun rose, and never a token of the ghost could I see or hear. So I just rolled myself up again on the window-seat and had a sleep.

It was the same again the third night, and, faith, I began to get uneasy.

"What's become of him now, I wonder?" thinks I. Then, when I had considered a bit over the matter, I says to myself, "Sure, he's hiding away somewhere. I must go and see what he's after, at all."

So I takes up my candle, and walks along the passage, and across the great hall, till I got to the east wing of the castle. There I stood and listened a bit. Sure enough, I heard a groan, but a long way off.

So I shouted out: "Hallo! ghost; where are you, at all?"

It was at the end of the long gallery in the east wing that I found my gentleman at last. There he was, looking out through the window, as though he was admiring the pretty country under the moonlight. But he didn't seem enjoying himself, poor creature, and kept on groaning worse than ever.

"What a chap you are for groaning!" says I, "as though that could do any good. If you're sorry for what you used to

do when you were alive, why can't you think it over and keep quiet?"

As soon as the ghost heard me, he turned about and, if you'll believe me, he looked fairly startled.

"Why do you trouble me, man?" he says. "Begone and leave me in peace."

"Och!" thinks I, "is that your tune? It's a very different sort of note from what you sang the other night." So I says:

"Sure, I am waiting for some of those terrible things you threatened to do to me. When are you going to begin?"

"Base slave!" says the ghost, clapping his hand on his ghost of a sword.

"Wirrasthrew!" says I, "it's no use your doing that, anyway. Your sword can't do more harm than this pipe of mine; not so much: and you know it."

You should have seen the look of the ghost's face as I said these words. He seemed just bursting with passion; his eyes opened wide, but they couldn't flash, as all the fire had gone out of them long ago. Sure, no one ever saw a ghost in such a rage before.

Then he threw a look of contempt on me, and turned on his heel and made off. He didn't run exactly, for that would not be genteel in a ghost, but he slipped away pretty quick, and I had a bit of trouble to keep up with him, with my lame leg. But I followed him pretty close through one gallery after another, and at last he stopped short.

"Soldier," says he, more quiet and civil than ever he had been before, "I beg that you will leave me in peace. My doom is terrible, condemned as I am to walk the earth by night in expiation of my crimes. Why add to my awful punishment?"

"Why?" says I. "Sure, don't I want to get you out of this place, where, as I said before, you've got no business to be, and which belongs to my old colonel? If you must haunt something, go and haunt some old ruins that nobody lives in, and not a decent castle like this, that only wants a bit of plumbing and carpentering to be made all snug and comfortable for living folks."

"I cannot leave it," says the ghost; "it is my home. It would increase my punishment tenfold were I doomed to haunt a strange abode."

"Faith!" says I, "I don't care a straw for that. But if you won't come out of this, sure I'll turn the tables on you and haunt you every night, whether you like it or not."

Och! the groan the ghost gave when I said this! It was the best I had heard yet. Then the creature was off again, and I followed him up till the sunrise, when he melted away like butter in the pan.

Well, I had rare sport with him. Night after night I hunted him up, and left him no peace at all. Sometimes I talked to him, and sometimes I didn't; but I was always at his heels, chasing him round the castle and driving him fair crazy. It went some against the grain with me to worry the ghost of a gentleman-born in this way; but I thought of my dear old colonel, and I never let him be. Heaven forgive me for the hard words I gave to that poor ghost; the bad names I called him, insulting him worse and worse every night. Och! I led him a life.

At last one night he turned on me and says he, in a pitiful tone which pretty nigh went to my heart,

"Will nothing make you cease this persecution?"

"Well," says I, "that depends. What have you to offer?"

"What can I offer?" says he.

"Why, now," says I, "look here, ghost. Couldn't you put me up to a good thing? Don't you know of a hidden treasure somewhere? I have heard that ghosts often do that."

"I know of none," says he, looking very sad and sorry.

"Well," says I, "I thought you could do nothing, and was only trying of you. I don't want any treasures. I only want you to get out of this place, and so, if need be, I mean to haunt you as long as I live."

"Ah," says the ghost, "there is comfort in that."

"Is there, indeed?" says I. "How do you make that out?"

"You will continue to haunt me as long as you live?" says he. "Be it so. But do you forget? What is your miserable speck of life to mine? Have I not lived in the spirit for nigh two hundred years, and shall I not thus exist to all eternity? The little that is left of your base life is but a drop in the ocean of my own. For that short space I must be patient."

I could scarcely keep myself from laughing in his face, for I knew that was what he'd be coming to, and I was ready for him.

"Och!" says I, "that's how you look at it, is it? Sure, thin, ye make a big mistake entirely."

"What mean you?" says the ghost; and I could see that he was bothered all over.

"Sure, I'll show you what I mean to-morrow night," says I, "if I live, please God."

Well, he couldn't get a word more out of me, for I had got a scheme up my sleeve which I meant to keep to myself for the present.

Now, Biddy O'Rourke, my pretty sweetheart, bless her! had a bit of a younger brother, fourteen years old or thereabouts, who was always getting into scrapes and mischief, breaking windows and chasing the pigs, and fighting the other boys as bold as a soldier.

So when I goes down to the village again, I gets Thady into a corner all quiet, and nobody by, and says I: "Whist! Thady, my boy; would you like to see the ghost?"

Thady, he turned pale a bit at first, and then those wicked young eyes of his lighted up, full of mischief, and he grinned.

"Sure, Tim," says he, "that would I. Is there a ghost, then, anyway?"

Then I up and told him all about the "bad baronet" and what a poor creature he was, with never a ha'porth of harm in him; and how I'd been chivying him all around the castle night after night, till I'd half worried the life out of him. And Thady laughed, and was just mad to go with me and see the ghost. By St. Patrick! that boy had no more fear in him than there is in an old wooden gate-post, and he never shook a limb when we got into the castle.

"Who is this urchin?" says Sir Roderick, fuming and glaring in the old way.

"Och!" says I, "shame on my bad manners for not introducing him. This is Thady O'Rourke, my brother-in-law that is to be, and he has come here to help me with this job."

"I do not understand you," says the ghost, looking more bothered than ever.

"Maybe you don't," says I; "but I'll soon make you. I have brought this boy with me to help me to haunt you, and he's just coming here with me, night after night, to learn the business, so as he can take it up when I've done with it."

Never a word did the ghost say; but he started back a step or two and gave a groan.

"And," says I, "that won't be the end of it; for Thady when he grows up, and I am under the turf, will just get another boy like himself—there's lashings of them about—to learn the business, and take his place after him, and so it will go on if you stay here forever. Arrah! now, ghost, how do you like that lookout, anyway?"

Och! the poor ghost was a sight to be seen just then. He stamped, and he swore, and he fumed, and he scowled at Thady; but it was all of no use, for Thady, seeing he couldn't do any harm, laughed in his pasty face, and was mad to worry him.

Well, we led him a pretty dance that night and the night after; and Thady just enjoyed the fun, he did.

We hadn't been at it for more than a week or so, when one night we couldn't find the ghost anywhere. We tramped through all the galleries, upstairs and downstairs; but it was all quiet, and never a creaking, or a groaning, or a token of the ghost did we see.

"What's become of him, anyhow?" says Thady.

"Whist!" says I, "look yonder, Thady!"

And, och! it was a pretty sight that we saw. For down in the long walk, between the trees, what should we see but the old ghost, with his sword tucked under his arm, and his bundle on his shoulder, walking off as fast as he could tread, with his old wig trailing down his back behind and his spurs gleaming in the moonlight.

"By the powers, Thady!" says I, "we have made him clear out at last."

And we both shouts out of the window together as loud as we could:

"A good-night to you, ghost, and a safe and pleasant journey!"

Well, if you believe me, Thady and I watched night after night up at the old castle, to see if the ghost was to change his mind and come back; but never a token of him did we discover. He was gone for good and all; and then we let the secret out to the neighbors, and the colonel, and all the country round. At first they wouldn't believe it; but sure, they couldn't hold out long; for the colonel himself went up to the castle at night with us, and saw the ghost wasn't there at all, which showed it was true as a miracle.

And then what doings they had! Sir Peter, he brought

down builders and carpenters and gardeners from Dublin, and had the old castle made as good as new, and all the ugly weeds pulled up out of the pretty walks and gardens. Then they furnished the place like any palace, and the family came down and lived in it, and gave a ball to all the quality for miles around.

And the colonel was as good as his word, and better; for when Biddy and me was married he gave us the £50 he promised, and situations at the castle, with nothing to do but to keep the old ghost out.

As for Thady, he had a job, too, on the demesne; and proud he was of the work he'd done, helping me to make the eviction.

And I gathered a lot of other lads about me one day, and I says to them, says I:

"Look here, boys, don't you take heed of ghosts, or any such like. The world's just full of 'em, and there's not a ha'porth of harm in 'em if you pluck up and face 'em, and show 'em you ain't afraid. Half the troubles and botherations o' life is nothing but ghosts, and if you let 'em haunt you they'll do it; but if you turn round and laugh at 'em, it won't be long before they take themselves off like the morning mists before the blessed sun."

ETCHING: ESCAPE OF THE SLAVER

BY CHARLES STEWART DAVISON

A graphic description of a night-hunt for a slave-ship by one of our old cruisers on the African station.

In the blue hollow of the starless night, the shaded lights of the gun-brig made but a dimly brighter area in the void immensity. To the watcher upon her deck the feeble rays which escaped from the darkened battle lanterns made the black bulwarks and black shrouds, trending into the mere murkiness of her tops, unreal; and only space itself reality. The slow yielding crush of her heavy bows into the imperceptible heave of the ocean, brought but the slightest phosphoric glimmer in the faint moist freshness of the night; no current of air drew through the idle cordage; no yard creaked in its slings; no plank complained against its fellow. All below slept. On deck the few who moved trod with the noiseless step of naked feet on well-worn planks.

One shapeless mass of darker hue marked where, toward the bows, a gun's crew had cast loose and trained a long twelve-pounder. Grouped round its breech, listening, gazing, they now waited; while the captain of the gun, leaning against it, twisted the lanyard loosely between his fingers.

Near it, the brig's commander stood, rigid as the taut rigging and oaken rail against which he braced either hand. His gaze into the north was fixed upon that spot where the visible darkness seemed to take on a deeper tone. Did he err? Was this but one more delusion amid the unrealities of night? In doubt he waited silent, ready, intent.

A low-hulled schooner—under the land and nearer the horizon than the dark shadow showed—with taper spars raking far aft, caught the light drain of air which came before the first heralded approach of the morning. Swaying gently down, she seemed to reach forward with her hollow bows; and, dipping her leeward planking a few inches more into the clear green of the Atlantic, waveringly she pointed her quadrant-sweeping bowsprit to the west. Then—as the light ripple fled from her cutwater—slipped stealthily forward on her course, while, through the slight haze which came with the gray dawn, the loom of her great mainsail showed faintly high in air, where no sail was.

COCUZZA

BY MASSIMO ADOUIN

The love of a deformed and hideous being for a beautiful woman is a theme not unknown to fiction; but in this story, from the Italian, it leads to an exciting scene, wherein love overcomes even the absorbing passion of revenge. Translated by E. Cavazza : For Short Stories.

A head like a marionette's, fan-like ears, a hump by way of bust—the whole balanced on two frail, rickety legs which appeared shorter by contrast with two muscular, gigantic, gorilla-like arms, that touched the ground.

This rough sketch of humanity was Cocuzza, the incomparable Cocuzza, the king of dwarfs, the grand attraction of the circus, the idol of the crowd—because, for the crowd, grace, wit, strength, dexterity, courage, nothing is worth as much as a deformity.

And every evening when, dressed up with a three-pointed cap, an immense gray blouse, his nose plastered with paint, slapped, buffeted, scorned by the clowns and riders, under a hailstone of fists and kicks, the sorry being rolled in the arena like an unclean animal—there burst forth in the hall an explosion of bravo! a stamping of feet, a delirium.

Encore, Cocuzza! Encore!! Encore!!!

This monster, devoted to solitude and to abjectness—this monster was a man after all, and he loved. He loved the most beautiful horsewoman of the circus, Mlle. Nina, who was about to marry M. Adolfo, the acrobat.

The evening that she appeared for the first time, sparkling with the fire of her golden spangles amid a cloud of gauze, and proudly borne in triumph by her lover, who, standing erect upon two white horses, upheld her as if she were a white feather he—the poor cobbler whom the fancy of a circus manager had taken from his bench—was dazzled by her.

It was at first veneration, worship which he had for her—something like the adoration of a subject for his queen, of the pagan for his idol, the devotee for his deity—such a distance separated him from her: her, the splendid, admired creature; he the miserable and accursed pariah.

But he knew that worms crawl over blossoms; he had seen the equestrienne depoetized, in a greasy dressing-sacque, mending old rags, and watching a stew-pan. And then, the frantic applause with which he was received every evening

intoxicated him, deluded him as to his own worth. In short, there is in the bottom of the heart of every man a measureless pride. He began to dream the impossible, to make his idol descend step by step from her pedestal.

And as he was of no account, any more than a dog, no one minded him, and he enjoyed certain intimate privileges; in the green-room, Nina would sometimes deign to appeal to his kindness to put in a pin, button a boot, bring a shawl; and the monster would graze with his knotty hands the beautiful bare shoulders of the equestrienne.

One evening, after having drunk an extra bottle of wine, he dared to confess what he called *his love*! After a moment of amazement, she laughed in his face as he straightened up his small person, hoping, perhaps, to impress her. Then he depicted to her his mute adoration, his fever of love, his sleepless nights; in his outburst there were passion, imagery, and words of fire; she laughed louder; he tried to take her hand, she drew it back with a movement of disgust; he caught at her dress. Then Nina took her switch, lashed him in the face, and darted out of the room.

That evening, incapable of evading the buffets and of sustaining his part with all the abjectness desirable—he was beaten and hissed.

The next evening, a full house. The posters announced: Novelty! Great Attractions! Tableaux! Christians given as prey to Wild Beasts! Cocuzza the bear and Mlle. Nina!

The ordinary feats—trained animals, clowns, acrobats, trapeze and bars—have scant success. People are waiting.

Finally, Cocuzza and Nina, dressed in antique robes, make their entrance. Nina is fascinating in her white peplum, with her long black hair dishevelled upon her bare shoulders. She takes the inspired pose of the martyrs confessing their faith, while Cocuzza—hideous in his costume—binds her firmly to the stake. This done, Cocuzza absents himself, to reappear after some minutes with the bear that he leads by one ear and that growls and struggles furiously. Applause.

Then Cocuzza approaches Nina and feigns to extort from her an abjuration of faith. In reality he murmurs to her a passionate declaration.

"I love you! Will not you listen to me? I love you! Nina have pity on me! No? Will you not hear me? Well,

I unchain the bear. I have made him drink brandy, I have beaten him, and this morning I stole away his meat. He is hungry, he is furious. Will you not hear me, Nina?"

"No," Nina signs with her head.

"Oh! do not push me to extremes. I have had enough of the contempt of these people; I will serve no longer as their plaything. I am a man, I too; why should I not have the right to love and to be loved? Because I am deformed, do you repulse me? Ah! if you could see all that my heart contains of love for you, and of adoration! The others do not know how to love; the more they have of physical advantages, the more their fatuity renders them inconstant. So, your Adolfo, that ought to pass his life at your knees, your Adolfo deceives you."

She became very pale and made a violent gesture of denial.

"He deceives you, while I——"

A contemptuous smile from Nina recalled him to the feeling of his horrible ugliness.

"It is true," he murmured bitterly. "I was forgetting!"

And suddenly passing from supplication to anger.

"For the last time, will you or will you not hear me?"

"No," she said. "Help! help!"

With a rapid gesture, he removed the muzzle of the bear, leaped aside, and the animal rushed upon its victim.

The scene was so realistic, that the crowd applauded furiously, especially when they saw the beautiful martyr faint.

What passed then in the mind of the miserable dwarf? Was he conscious of his infamy? Was he seized with pity for her youth and beauty! Did he deem life impossible without her? Did he perhaps plan to make his exit, rehabilitating himself with an extraordinary *coup*, from a world in which he had been so cruelly mocked, scorned, hated?

In the very moment when the bear was about to plant his claws in Nina's shoulders, the dwarf clasped the beast in his muscular arms and both rolled upon the ground. It was a close struggle, body to body, furious, formidable; but before the servants of the circus had time to hasten to Cocuzza's aid, the bear had stuck its terrible fangs into his neck.

And the imbecile crowd, that did not yet suspect the drama developed under its eyes—the crowd shouted, amidst a tempest of applause and stamping of feet. Encore, Cocuzza! Bravo, Cocuzza! Encore!! Encore!!!

QUARANTINE ISLAND

BY WALTER BESANT

In this interesting story it is shown that, although an exasperated lover may fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, it is still possible that the object of his affections may be drifted to his abode in a tropical island. The lady naturally finds him duly repentant and prepared to own that he is of the stuff of which fools are made. Copyright, 1891, by the Authors' Alliance.

"No," he cried passionately, "you drew me on; you led me to believe that you cared for me; you encouraged me. What! can a girl go on as you have done without meaning anything? Does a girl allow a man to press her hand—to keep her hand—without meaning anything? Unless these things mean nothing, you are the most heartless girl in the whole world—yes—I say, the coldest, the most treacherous, the most heartless!"

It was evening and moonlight, a soft and delicious night in September. The waves lapped gently at their feet; the warm breeze played upon their faces; the moon shone upon them; an evening wholly unfit for such a royal rage as this young gentleman—two and twenty is still young—exhibited. He walked about on the parade, which was deserted except for this solitary pair, gesticulating, waving his arms, mad with the madness of wounded love.

She sat on one of the seaside benches, her hands clasped, her head bent. He went on: he recalled the day when first they met; he reminded her of the many, many ways in which she led him on to believe that she cared for him. He accused her of making him love her in order to laugh at him. When he could find nothing more to say, he flung himself upon the bench, but on the other end of it, and crossed his arms and dropped his head upon them. So that there were two on the bench, one at either end, and both with their heads dropped—a pretty picture of a lovers' quarrel. But his was worse than a lovers' quarrel. It was the end of everything, for the girl was engaged to another man.

She rose. If he had been looking up, he would have seen that there were tears in her eyes and on her cheek.

"Mr. Fernie," she stammered timidly, "I suppose there is nothing more to say. I am, no doubt, all that you have called me. I am heartless. I have led you on. Well—but I did not know—how could I tell?—that you were taking

things so seriously? How can you be so angry just because I can't marry you? One girl is no better than another. There are plenty of girls in the world. I thought you liked me and I—but what is the use of talking? I am heartless and cold—I am treacherous and vain and cruel—and—and—won't you shake hands with me once more—Claude—before we part?"

"No, I will never shake hands with you again—never—never. By Heavens! Nothing that could happen now would ever make me shake hands with you again. I hate you—I loathe you—I shudder at the sight of you; I could never forgive you—never. You have ruined my life. Shake hands with you? Who but a heartless and worthless woman could propose such a thing?"

She shivered and shook at his wild words. She could not, as she said, understand the vehemence of the passion that held the man. He was more than half mad and she was only half sorry. Forgive the girl. She was only seventeen, just fresh from her governess; she knew nothing about the reality and vehemence of passion; she thought that they had been very happy together. Claude, to be sure, was ridiculously fond of taking her hand—once he kissed her hand to show the depth of his friendship. He was such a good companion; they had had such a pleasant time—it was a dreadful pity that he should be so angry. Besides, it wasn't as if she liked the other man, who was old and horrid.

"Good-by, then, Claude," she said. "Perhaps when we meet again you will be more ready to forgive me. Oh?" she laughed. "It is so silly that a man like you, a great, strong, clever, handsome man, should be so foolish over a girl! Besides, you ought to know that a girl can't have things her own way always. Good-by, Claud. Won't you shake hands?"

She laid her hand upon his shoulder—just touched it—turned—and fled.

She had not far to go. The villa where she lived was within five minutes' walk. She ran in and found her mother alone in the drawing-room.

"My dear," the mother said irritably, "I wish to goodness you wouldn't run out after dinner. There's Sir William in the dining-room still."

"Let him stay there, mother dear. He'll drink up all the wine and go to sleep, and then we shall be rid of him."

"Go in, Florence, and bring him out. It isn't good for him, at his age, to drink so much."

"Let the servants go," the girl replied rebelliously.

"My dear—your own accepted lover. Have you no right feeling? O Florence! and when I am so ill, and you know—I told you——"

"A woman should not marry her grandfather. I've had more than enough of him to-day already. You made me promise to marry him. Until I do marry him, he may amuse himself. As soon as we are married, I shall fill up all the decanters and keep them full, and encourage him to drink as much as ever he possibly can."

"My dear, are you mad?"

"Oh, no! I believe I have only just come to my senses. Mad? No. I have been mad; now—when it is too late—I am sane—when it is too late, when I have just understood what I have done!"

"Nonsense, child, you are doing what every girl does. You have accepted the hand of an old man who can give you a fine position and a great income and every kind of luxury. What more can a girl desire? When I die—you know already—there will be nothing—nothing at all for you. Marriage is your only chance——"

At this moment the door opened and Sir William himself appeared. He was not, although a man so rich and therefore so desirable, quite a nice old man to look at; not quite such an old man as a girl would fall in love with at first sight; perhaps under the surface were unsuspected virtues by the dozen. He was short and fat; his hair was white; his face was red; he had great white eyebrows; he had thick lips; his eyes rolled unsteadily and his shoulders lurched: he had taken more wine than is good for a man of seventy.

He held out both hands and lurched forward. "Florenshe," he said thickly, "let us sit down together somewhere; letsh talk, my dear."

The girl slipped from the proffered hands and fled the room.

"Whatsh matter with the girl?" said Sir William.

Out at sea—all by itself—somewhere about thirty miles from a certain good-sized island, in a certain ocean, there lies

another little island—an eyot—a mile long and half a mile broad. It is a coral islet; the coral reef stretches out all round it, except in one or two places where the rocks shelve suddenly making it possible for a ship to anchor there. The islet is flat, but all round it runs a kind of natural sea wall about two feet high and as many broad; behind it, on the side which the wall protects from the wind, is a little grove of low, stunted trees, the name of which the successive tenants of the island were never curious to ascertain. The area protected by the sea wall, as low as the sea level, was covered all over with low, rank grass.

At the north end of the islet a curious round rock exactly like a martello tower, but rather higher, rose out of the water, separated from the sea-wall by twenty or thirty feet of deep water, dark blue, transparent, sometimes rolling and rushing and tearing at the sides of the rock, sometimes gently lifting the sea-weed that clung to the sides. Round the top of the rock flew, screaming, all the year round, the sea-birds. Far away in the horizon, like a little cloud, one could see land; it was the larger island to which this place belonged. At the south end was a lighthouse, built just like all lighthouses, with low, white buildings at its foot, and a flagstaff, and an enclosure which was a feeble attempt at a flower garden. Half a mile from the lighthouse, where the sea-wall broadened into a wide level space, there was a wooden house of four rooms—dining-room, salon, and two bedrooms. It was a low house provided with a veranda on either side; the windows had no glass in them, but thick shutters in case of hurricanes; there were doors to the rooms, but they were never shut. Nothing was shut or locked up or protected. On the land side there was a garden in which roses—a small red rose—grew in quantities, and a few English flowers; the elephant creeper with its immense leaves clambered up the veranda poles and over the roof; there was a small plot of ground planted with pineapples, and a solitary banana-tree stood under the protection of the house, its leaves blown to shreds, its head bowed down.

Beyond the garden was a collection of three or four huts where lived the Indian servants and their families.

The residents of this retreat—this secluded earthly paradise—were the servants with their wives and children; the three lighthousemen, who messed together; and the captain,

governor, or commander-in-chief, who lived in the house all by himself, because he had no wife or family.

Now the remarkable thing about this island is that, although it is so far from any other inhabited place, and although it is so small, the human occupants number many thousands. With the exception of the people above named, these thousands want nothing, neither food nor drink. They live side by side under the rank grass, without headstones or even graves, to mark their place; without a register or record of their departure, without coffins. There they lie, sailors, soldiers, coolies, negroes, forgotten and lost, as much as if they had never been born. And if their work lives after them, nobody knows what that work is. They belong to the vast army of the Anonymous. Poor Anonymous! They do all the work; they grow our corn and breed our sheep; they make and mend for us; they build up our lives for us; we never know them nor thank them nor think of them; all over the world they work for their far-off brethren; and when one dies we know not, because another takes his place. And at the last a mound of green grass, or even nothing but an undistinguished slip of ground.

Here lie side by side the Anonymous—thousands of them. Did I say they were forgotten? Not quite. They are remembered by some. At sunset the Indian women and the children retreat to their huts and stay there till sunrise next morning. They dare not so much as look outside the door, because the place is crowded with white, shivering, sheeted ghosts. Speak to one of these women; she will point out to you, trembling, one, two, half a dozen ghosts. It is true that the dull eye of the Englishman can see nothing. She sees them—distinguishes them—one from the other—she can see them every night—yet she can never overcome her terror. The governor or captain or commander-in-chief, for his part, sees nothing. He sleeps in his house quite alone, with his cat and his dog, windows and doors wide open, and has no fears of any ghost. If he felt any fear, he would be surrounded and pestered to death every night with multitudes of ghosts, but he fears nothing. He is a doctor, you see, and the doctor never yet was afraid of ghosts.

How did they come here—this regiment of dead men? In several ways. Cholera accounts for most; yellow fever for some; other fevers for some; but, for most, cholera was the

destroyer. Because, you see, this is Quarantine Island. If a ship has cholera, or any other infectious disease on board, it cannot touch at the island, close by which is a great place for trade and has every year a quantity of ships calling. The infected ship has to betake herself to Quarantine Island, where her people are landed and where they stay until she has a clean bill. And that, sometimes, is not until the greater part of her people have exchanged their berths on board for permanent lodgings ashore. Now you understand. The place is a great cemetery. It lies under the hot sun of the tropics; the sky is always blue; the sun is always hot; it is girdled by the sea; it is always silent, for the Indian children do not laugh or shout, and the Indian women are too much awed by the presence of the dead to wrangle—always silent save for the crying of the seabirds on the rock. There are no letters, no newspapers, no friends, no duties, none, save when a ship puts in; and then for the doctor—farewell rest, farewell sleep, until the bill of health is clean. Once a fortnight or so, if the weather permits and if the communications are open—that is, if there is no ship there—a boat arrives from the big island with rations and letters and supplies. Sometimes a visitor comes, but not often; because, should an infected ship put in, he would have to stay as long as the ship. A quiet, peaceful, monotonous life for one who is weary of the world or for a hermit; and as good as the top of a pillar for silence and for meditation.

The islet lay all night long in much the same silence which lapped and wrapped it all the day. The water washed musically upon the shore; the light in the lighthouse flashed at intervals; there was no other sign of life. Toward six o'clock in the morning the dark east grew gray; then long white rays shot out across the sky and then the light began to spread. Before the gray turned to pink or the pink to crimson, before there was any corresponding glow in the western sky, the man who occupied the bungalow turned out of bed and came forth into the veranda, clad in his silk pajamas and silk jacket, which formed the evening or dress suit in which he slept. The increasing light showed that he was a young man still, perhaps about thirty, a young man with a strong and resolute face and a square forehead. He stood under the veranda, watching as he had done every day for two

years and more, the break of day and the sunrise. He drank in the delicious breeze cooled by a thousand miles and more of ocean—no one knows the freshness and sweetness of the air until he has so stood in the open and watched the dawn of a day in the tropics. He went back to the house, and came back again clad in a rough suit of tweed and a helmet. His servant was waiting for him with his morning tea; he drank it and sallied forth.

By this time the short-lived splendor of the east was fast broadening to right and left, until it stretched from pole to pole. Suddenly the sun leaped up and the colors fled and the splendor vanished. The sky became, all over, a deep, clear blue; and round and about the sun was a brightness which no eye but that of the seabird can face and live. The man in the helmet turned to the seashore and walked briskly along the seawall. Now and then he stepped down upon the white coral sand, picked up a shell and looked at it, and threw it away. When he came to the Sea Bird's Rock, he sat down and watched it.

In the deep water below, sea snakes red and purple and green were playing about; great bluefish rolled lazily round and round the rock; in the recesses lurked unseen the great conger eel, which dreads nothing but the thing of long and horny tentacles—the ourite or squid, the humorous tajar which bites the bathers in shallow water all for fun and mischief, and with no desire to eat their flesh; and a thousand curious creatures which this man, who had ruined his eyes by days and days of watching, came here every day to look at. While he stood there, the seabirds took no manner of notice of him, flying close about him, lighting on the shore close at his feet. They were intelligent enough to know that he was only dangerous with a gun in his hand. Presently he got up and continued his walk. All round the seawall of the island measures three miles. He took this walk every morning and every evening in the early cool and the late. The rest of the time he spent indoors.

When he got back, it was past seven, and the day was growing hot. He took his towels, went down to the shore to a place where the coral reef receded, leaving a channel out to the open. The channel swarmed with sharks, but he bathed there every morning, keeping in the shallow water, while the creatures watched him from the depths with long-

ing eyes. He wore a pair of slippers on account of the lap, which is a very pretty little fish indeed to look at, but lurks in dark places near the shore if he is too lazy to get out of the way, and if you put your foot near him he sticks out his dorsal fin, which is prickly and poisoned, and when a man gets that into the sole of his foot, he goes home and cuts his leg off, and has to pretend that he lost it in action.

When he had bathed, the doctor went back to his house and performed some simple additions to his toilet; that is to say, he washed the salt water out of his hair and beard—not much else. As for collars, neckties, braces, waistcoats, black coats, they were not wanted on this island. No rare watches and clocks. The residents go by the sun. The doctor got up at daybreak and took his walk, as you have seen, and his bath. He was then ready for his breakfast and for a solid meal in which fresh fish newly caught that morning, and curried chicken, with claret and water, formed the principal part. A cup of coffee came after, with a cigar and a book in the veranda. By this time the sun was high, and the glare of forenoon had succeeded the coolness of the dawn. After the cigar, the doctor went indoors. The room was furnished with a few pictures, a large bookcase full of books chiefly medical, a table covered with papers and two or three chairs. No curtains, carpets, or blinds; the doors and windows wide open to the veranda on both sides.

He sat down and began writing—perhaps he was writing a novel—I think no one could think of a more secluded place for writing a novel. Perhaps he was doing something scientific. He continued writing till past midday. When he felt hungry, he went into the dining-room, took a biscuit or two, and a glass of Vermouth. Then, because it was now the hour for repose and because the air outside was hot, and the sea breeze had dropped to a dead calm, and the sun was like a red hot flaring furnace overhead, the doctor kicked off his boots and threw off his coat, lay down on a grass mat under the mosquito curtains, and instantly fell fast asleep. About five o'clock he awoke and got up; the heat of the day was over. He took a long draught of cold tea, which is the most refreshing and the coolest drink in the world. The sun was now getting low and the air was growing cool. He put on his helmet and set off again to walk round his domain. This done, he bathed again. Then he went home as the sun sank,

and night fell instantly without the intervention of twilight. They served him dinner, which was like his breakfast but for the addition of some cutlets. He took his coffee; he took a pipe—two pipes slowly, with a book—he took a whiskey and soda; he went to bed. I have said that he had no watch—it hung idly on a nail—therefore he knew not the time, but it would very likely be about half-past nine. However that might be, he was the last person up in this ghostly island of the Anonymous Dead.

This doctor, captain-general, and commandant of Quarantine Island was none other than the young man who began this history with a row royal and a kingly rage. You think, perhaps, that he had turned hermit in the bitterness of his wrath; and for the fault of one simple girl had resolved on the life of a solitary. Nothing of the kind. He was an army doctor, and he left the service in order to take this very eligible appointment, where one lived free and could spend nothing except a little for claret. He proposed to stay there for a few years in order to make a little money, by means of which he might become a specialist. This was his ambition. As for that love business seven years past, he had clean forgotten it, girl and all. Perhaps there had been other tender passages. Shall a man wasting in despair die because a girl throws him over? Never! Let him straightway forget her. Let him tackle his work; let him put off the business of love—which can always wait—until he can approach it once more in the proper spirit of illusion, and once more fall to worshipping an angel.

Neither nature nor civilization have designed a man's life to be spent in monotony; most of us have to work for the daily bread, which is always an episode, and sometimes a pretty dismal episode, to break and mark the day. One day there came such a break in the monotonous round of the doctor's life. It came in the shape of a ship. She was a large steamer and she steamed slowly. It was early in the morning, before breakfast. The doctor and one of the lighthousemen stood on the landing-place watching her.

"She's in quarantine, doctor, sure as sure," said the man. "I wonder what she's got. Fever for choice. Cholera, most likely. Well, we take our chance."

"She's been in bad weather," said the doctor. "Look,

she's lost her mizzen, her bows are stove in. I wonder what's the meaning of it. She's a transport——" She drew nearer. "Troops! Well, I'd rather have soldiers than coolies."

She was a transport, she was full of soldiers, time-expired men and invalids going home. She was bound from Calcutta to Portsmouth. She had met with a cyclone, driven out of her course and battered; she made for the nearest port when cholera broke out on board.

Before nightfall the island was dotted with white tents, a hospital was rigged up with the help of the ship's spars and canvas, the men were all ashore, and the Quarantine doctor and the ship's doctor were hard at work among the cases, and the men were dropping in every direction.

Among the passengers were a dozen ladies and some children. The doctor gave up his house to them and retired to a tent or to the lighthouse or anywhere to sleep; much sleep could not be expected for some time to come. He saw the boat land with the ladies on board. He took off his hat as they walked past. There were old ladies, middle-aged ladies, young ladies—well, there always is this combination; then he went on with his work. Then he had a curious sensation as if something of the past had been revived in his mind. It is a very common feeling. And one of the ladies changed color when she saw him.

Then began the struggle for life. No more monotony in Quarantine Island. Right and left, all day long, the men fell one after the other; day after day more men fell, more men died. The two doctors quickly organized their staff, the ship's officers for clinical clerks, some of the ladies for nurses. And the men, the simple soldiers, sat about in their tents with pale faces, expecting.

Of those who worked there was one—a nurse—who never seemed weary, never wanted rest, never asked for relief. She would work day and night in the hospital; if she went out, it was to cheer up the men outside. The doctor was conscious of her work and of her presence, but he never spoke to her; when he came to the hospital, another nurse received him; if he passed her, she seemed always to turn away; at a less troubled time he would have observed this. At times he felt again that odd sensation of a recovered past, but he regarded it not—he had other things to consider.

There is no time more terrible for the courage of the stout-

est man than a time of cholera on board ship or in a little place whence there is no escape; no time worse for a physician than one when his science is mocked and his skill avails nothing. Day after day the doctor fought from morning till night and far on to the morning again; day after day the new graves were dug; day after day the chaplain read over the new-made graves the service of the dead for the gallant lads who thus died, inglorious, for their country.

Then came a time, at last, when the conqueror seemed tired of conquest. He ceased to strike. The fury of the disease spent itself; the cases happened singly, one or two a day, instead of ten or twenty; the sick began to recover; they began to look about them. The single cases ceased; the pestilence was stayed; and they sat down to count the cost. There had been on the transport three hundred and seventy-five men, thirty-two officers, half a dozen ladies, a few children and the ship's crew. Twelve officers, two ladies, and a hundred men had perished, when the plague abated.

"One of your nurses is ill, doctor."

"Not cholera, I do hope."

"No—I believe a kind of collapse. She is at the bungalow. I told them I would send you over."

"I will go at once." He left a few directions and walked over to the house. It was, he found, the nurse who had been, of all, the most useful and the most active. She was now lying, hot and feverish, her mind wandering, inclined to ramble in her talk. He laid his hand upon her temples, he felt her pulse, he looked upon her face; the odd feeling of something familiar struck him again. "I don't think it is very much," he said. "A little fever, she may have been in the sun; she has been working too hard; her strength has given way." He still held her wrist.

"Claude," murmured the sick girl, "you are very cruel—I didn't know, and a girl cannot always have her own way."

Then he recognized her. "Good Heavens!" he cried. "It is Florence."

"Not always have her own way," she repeated. "If I could have my own way, do you think I would——"

"Florence," he said again. "And I did not even recognize her. Strange!"

Another of the ladies, the colonel's wife, was standing beside him.

"You know her, doctor?"

"I knew her a long time ago—some years ago—before she married."

"Married! Florence isn't married. You must be thinking of some one else."

"No. This is Florence Vernon, is it not? Yes—then she was engaged to marry a certain Sir William Duport."

"Oh! I believe there was some talk about an old man who wanted to marry her, but she wouldn't have him. It was just before her mother died. Did you know her mother?"

"I knew her mother when they were living at Eastbourne. So she refused the old man, did she? and has remained unmarried. Curious! I had almost forgotten her; the sight of her brings back the old days. Well, after she has pulled so gallantly through the cholera, we cannot have her beaten by a little fever. Refused the old man, did she?"

In the dead of night he was watching by the bedside, the colonel's wife with him.

"I had almost forgotten," whispered the lady, "that story of the old baronet. She told me about it once. Her mother was ill and anxious about her daughter because she had next to nothing except her annuity. The old man offered; he was an unpleasant old man; but there was a fine house and everything; it was all arranged. The girl was quite a child and understood nothing; she was to be sold, in fact, to this old person, who ought to have been thinking of his latter end instead of a pretty girl. Then the mother died suddenly and the girl broke it off. She was a clever girl and she has been teaching. For the last three years she has been in India; now she is going home under my charge. She is a brave girl, doctor, and a good girl. She has received half a dozen offers, but she has refused them all; so I think there must be somebody at home."

"Claude," murmured the girl, wandering, "I never thought you would care so much. If I had thought so, I would not have encouraged you. Indeed—indeed—I would not; I thought we were only amusing ourselves."

"Claude is a pretty name. What is your christian name, doctor?" asked the colonel's wife, curiously.

"It is—in fact—it is—Claude," he replied, blushing, but there was not enough light to see his blushes.

"Dear me!" said the colonel's wife.

A few days later, the patient, able to sit for a while in the shade of the veranda, was lying in a long cane chair. Beside her sat the colonel's wife, who had nursed her through the attack. She was reading aloud to her. Suddenly she stopped. "Here comes the doctor," she said; "and, Florence, my dear, his name, you know, is Claude. I think you have got something to talk about with Claude, besides the symptoms." With these words she laughed, nodded her head, and ran into the *salon*.

The veranda with its green blinds of cane hanging down, and its matting on the floor, and its easy-chairs and tables, made a pretty room to look at; in its dim light the fragile figure, pale, thin, dressed in white, would have lent interest even to a stranger. To the doctor, I suppose, it was only a "case." He pushed the blinds aside and stepped in, strong, big, masterful. "You are much better," he said. "You will very soon be able to walk about. Only be careful for a few days. It was lucky that this attack came when it did, and not a little earlier, when we were in the thick of the trouble. Well, you won't want me much longer, I believe."

"No, thank you," she murmured, without raising her eyes.

"I have had no opportunity," he said, standing over her, "of explaining that I really did not know who you were, Miss Vernon. Somehow I didn't see your face or I was thinking of other things; I suppose you had forgotten me; anyhow it was not until the other day, when I was called in, that I remembered. But I dare say you have forgotten me."

"No, I have not forgotten."

"I thought that long ago you had become Lady Duport."

"No, that did not take place."

"I hear that you have been teaching since your mother's death. Do you like it?"

"Yes, I like it."

"Do you remember the last time we met—on the seashore—do you remember—Florence?" his voice softened suddenly, "We had a quarrel about that old villain—do you remember?"

"I thought you had forgotten such a little thing as that—long ago—and the girl you quarrelled with."

"The point is rather whether you remember. That is of much more importance."

"I remember that you swore you would never forgive a

worthless girl who had ruined your life. Did I ruin your life, Dr. Fernie?"

He laughed. He could not honestly say that she had. In fact his life, so far as concerned his work, had gone on much about the same. But, then, such a man does not allow love to interfere with his career.

"And then you went and threw over the old man. Florence, why didn't you tell me that you were going to do that? You might have told me."

She shook her head. "Until you fell into such a rage and called me such dreadful names, I did not understand."

"Why didn't you tell me, Florence?" he repeated.

She shook her head again.

"You were but a little innocent child then," he said. "Of course you couldn't understand. I was an ass and a brute and a fool not to know."

"You said you would never forgive me. You said you would never shake hands with me again."

He held out his hand. "Since," he said, "you are not going to marry the old man, and since you are not engaged to anybody else, why—then—the old state of things is still going on—and—and—Florence, if you give me your hand, I shall keep it, mind."

"Dear me!" said the colonel's wife in the doorway, "do quarantine doctors always kiss their patients? But you told me, doctor dear, that your christian name was Claude, didn't you? That explained everything."

The ship with those of her company whom the plague had spared presently steamed away and, after being repaired, made her way to Portsmouth dockyard. But one of her company stayed behind, and now is queen or empress of the island—of which her husband is king, captain, commandant, and governor-general, and resident quarantine doctor.

HOW ANGELS GOT RELIGION

BY GEORGE BROOKE

It is pleasant to learn from this amusing sketch that "Angels" really "got religion." Unhappily we fear that the camp relapsed into its original state of sin when the influences that brought it to a repentant frame of mind were unexpectedly withdrawn. From *The Californian*.

"Never heard how we got religion to Angels, stranger? I thought, uv course, everybody 'd heerd that yarn. Tell yer? Why, sure; but let's lick again and I'll reminisce.

"Yer see 'twas afore Angels got to be sech a big camp as 'twas later on, but it was a rich camp and a mighty wicked one. There were lots uv chaps there who'd jest as soon die in their boots as eat; and every other house was a dance-house or a saloon or a gambling-hell. Pretty Pete and his pardner Five-Ace Bob was reckoned the wickedest men in the State; and Old Bill Jones, what kept the Golden West Hotel, had a national reputation for cussin'. The idea of a parson striking the camp never was thought uv; but one day I was playing bank into Pete's game when Five-Ace came a runnin' in 'n' sez: 'Boys, I'll be ——, but there's an ornery cuss of a parson jest rid up to Jones'. He's got a pardner with him, and he 'lows he's goin' to convert the camp.' 'The —— he is,' sez Pete. 'I'll finish the deal and go down and see about that.'

"So we all walked down to Jones', and thar, sure 'nuff, in the bar, talking with Old Bill, wuz the parson, black coat and white tie 'n' all. He was a big, squar'-shouldered chap with a black beard, and keen gray eyes that looked right through yer. His pardner was only a boy of twenty or so, with yeller, curly ha'r, pink and white gal's face, and big blue eyes. We all walked in, 'n' Pete he stands to the bar 'n' shouts fer all hands ter drink; 'n' to our surprise the parson 'n' the kid both stepped up and called for red lick 'n' drank it. After the drink was finished, the parson sez: 'Gents, as yer see, I'm a minister of the gospel; but I see no harm in any man drinking ez long ez he ain't no drunkard. I drank just now because I want you to see that I am not ashamed to do before yer face what I'd do behind yer back.' 'Right yer are, parson,' sez Pete; 'put it thar;' 'n' they shook hands, and then Pete he up and called off the hull gang—Five-Ace

'n' Lucky Barnes 'n' Dirty Smith 'n' one 'n' all the rest uv 'em. The parson shook hands with all uv us, and sed he was going to have a meetin' in Shifty Sal's dance-house that night, ez 'twas the biggest room in camp, 'n' ast us all to come, 'n' we sed we would.

"When we got outside Pete sez, 'Boys, you mind me, that devil dodger 'll capture the camp;' 'n' he did. That night we all went along down to Shifty's, and found the parson and the kid on the platform where the fiddlers ust to sit; and every man in camp wuz in the audience. The parson spoke first. He sed: 'Gents, I want to tell yer first off I don't want any uv yer dust. I've got enuff fer myself and my young friend, 'n' there won't be no rake-off in this yer meetin'-house, 'n' I'm not here to preach against any man's way o' makin' a livin'. I will preach ag'in' drunkenness, and I shall speak privately with the gamblers; but I want to keep you men in mind uv yer homes 'n' yer mothers 'n' yer wives 'n' yer sweethearts, and get yer to lead cleaner lives, so 's when yer meet 'em ag'in yer'll not hev to be 'shamed;' and then he sed we'd hev a song, 'n' the youngster he started in 'n' played a concertina, and sang, 'Yes, We Will Gather at the River'; 'n' there wuzn't one uv us that it didn't remind uv how our mothers ust to dress us up Sundays 'n' send us to Sunday-school, and stand at the door to watch us down street, and call us back to ast if we were sure we had our clean pocket handkerchur; 'n' I tell yer, mister, thar wuzn't a man with dry eyes in the crowd when he'd finished. That young feller had a v'ice like a angel. Pete he sed it wuz a tenner v'ice, but Five-Ace offered to bet him a hundred to fifty it wuz more like a fifteener or a twenty. Pete told Five-Ace he wuz a —— old fool 'n' didn't know what he wuz talkin' about.

"Well, things run along for about a week, 'n' one day Pete come to me and sez: 'Look here, Ralters, this yere camp ain't no jay camp, 'n' we've got to hev a church fer the parson. He's a jim-dandy, and won't ask for nothing. He'd jest natchelly go on prayin' and preachin', 'n' tryin' ter save a couple uv old whiskey-soaked souls like yourn and Bill Jones', which ain't wuth powder to blow 'em to ——, 'n' you'd let him go on doin' it in that old shack of Sal's 'n' never make a move. Now, I'm goin' to rustle round 'n' dig up dust enuff from the boys, and we'll jest build him a meetin'-house as'll be a credit to the camp;' 'n' in a few days the

boys hed a good log meetin'-house built, floored, 'n' benches in it, 'n' everythin'.

"The parson was tickled most to death. Nex't they built him a house, 'n' he 'n' his pardner moved into it. Then Pete said the gals must go; sed it wuz a dead, rank, snide game to work on the parson ter hev to go down street 'n' be guyed by them hussies ('n' they did guy him awful sometimes too); so the gals they went. Then Pete sed the church had to be properly organized; hed to hev deacons 'n' church wardens 'n' sextons 'n' things; so old Bill Jones 'n' Alabam 'n' me wuz made deacons, 'n' Pete 'n' Five-Ace was church wardens.

"In a month every last man in camp wuz worryin' 'bout his future state. Old Bill Jones came into meetin' one night with his face 'n' hands washed 'n' an old black suit on, 'n' sot down on the anxious bench and ast to be prayed fer. The parson knelt down 'n' put his arm round him, 'n' how he did pray! Before he got through, Lucky Barnes, Alabam, 'n' me wuz on the bench too, 'n' Pete shoved his Chinaman up the aisle by the collar 'n' sot him down 'longside o' me. Pete sed he was a high-toned Christian gentleman himself, hed been born 'n' raised a Christian, 'n' wuz a senior church warden to boot, and that he'd make a Christian of Ah Foo or spoil a Chinaman.

"That parson prayed most powerful that night. As a off-hand, rough 'n' tumble, free 'n' easy prayer, I never see his beat; he hed the whole aujience in tears, 'n' you might hev heard Pete's amens 'n' glory halleluyers off to Buller's Flat. Old Jones wuz a-rolling around on the floor 'n' hollering fer to be saved from the Devil before the parson were half finished, 'n' he made so much noise that Pete hed to fire a bucket uv water over him to quiet him down. That meein' wuz so plum full uv the spirit (ez the parson called it) that it never broke up till 12 o'clock, 'n' wouldn't hev broke up then only Pete sed he'd hev to quit, ez his shift to deal faro begun at 12.

"There wuz over twenty perfesses that night, not countin' Pete's Chinaman, 'n' next Sunday we hed a big baptism in the crick, 'n' forty uv us wuz put through. Pete sed he reckoned Ah Foo hed better be put through every day for a week or so, sence he'd always bin a dod-gasted heathen, but the parson 'lowed onc't wuz enuff, but he giv' him an extra dip jest fer luck; 'n' I never see a more ornery lookin' cuss in my life than that Chinese were when he came out.

"The Chinese laundrymen were ast to jine the church, but they wouldn't savey, 'n' so Pete 'n' Five-Ace, Old Bill 'n' me 'n' Alabam we waited on 'em 'n' told 'em to git, 'n' took 'em down to the crick 'n' baptized 'em jest fer luck. Pete said if they stayed Ah Foo 'ud git to backslidin' fust thing he knowed, 'n' then where'd *his* reputation be.

"Waal, stranger, things run along nice 'n' smooth fer a couple uv months er so till Chris'mus come nigh. The boys hed been a-keepin' mighty straight; there wasn't a man in camp that drunked more'n wuz hullsome fer him; there hedn't bin a shootin' scrape fer weeks. Pete said things wuz gittin' so all-fired ca'm 'n' peaceful that he wouldn't be at all surprised to git up sum fine day 'n' find Ah Foo with wings 'n' feathers on his legs like a Bramah hen. Nary a man packed a gun, 'n' when a gent 'ud forgit 'n' drop a cuss word he'd beg parding. The parson was thick with all the boys. He writ letters for us, advised us about all our biznus, 'n' knew all about everybody's affairs. Lots uv 'em gave him their dust-sack to keep fer 'em, 'n' he knowed where every man hed his cached.

"Along jest afore Chris'mas cum, Pete called a meetin' uv the deacons 'n' church wardens down to his place, 'n' after the sexton (Ah Foo) hed brought in a round of drinks he said: 'Gents, ez chairman *exofficer* in this yer layout, I move that we give the parson a little present fer Chris'mus. Yer know he won't take a durn cent from us, 'n' never has. Uv course he has taken a few thousand from time to time to send to orfings 'n' things uv that kind, but not a red for hissself or pard; 'n' I move that we make him a little present on Chris'mus day, 'n', it needn't be so —— little, either. Gents in favor 'll say so, and gents wot ain't kin keep mum. Carried, 'n' that settles it. Five-Ace 'n' me'll take in contributions, 'n' we won't take any less than fifty cases.'

"That wuz two days afore Chris'mus day, 'n' when it cum Pete 'n' Five-Ace hed about five thousand in dust 'n' nuggets fer the parson's present. Pete assessed Ah Foo a month's pay, 'n' he kicked hard accordin', but 'twere'n't no use.

"The day was bright 'n' clear, 'n' at 'leven o'clock every man in camp wuz at church. The little buildin' looked mighty tasty—all fixed off with pine tassels 'n' red berries we'd got in the woods, 'n' every man wuz dressed out in his best duds. At 'leven exact the parson 'n' the kid, who hed

bin standin' at the door shakin' hands 'n' wishin' everybody what cum in merry Chris'mus, cum in 'n' took their seats on the platform. Pete 'n' Five-Ace 'n' Bill Jones 'n' Alabam 'n' me sot on a bench jest in front o' the platform. We wuz all togged out in our best fixin's, 'n' Pete 'n' Five-Ace they sported dimons till yer couldn't rest. Waal, ez usual, the perceedin's opened up with er prayer from the parson; 'n' then we hed singin', 'n' it seemed ter me ez if I never hed heerd sich singin' in my life afore ez thet kid let out o' him thet day.

"Then the parson he started in ter jaw, 'n' I must ellow he giv us a great discourse. I never see him so long-winded afore, tho', 'n' Pete was beginnin' to get mighty restless 'n' oneasy, when all uv a suddint we heerd the door open 'n' shet quick 'n' sharp, 'n' every one turned round to find a great big black-bearded cuss at the door acoverin' the hull gang uv us with a double-bar'led shotgun, 'n' jest a standin' thar cool 'n' silent. 'Face round here, yer ——— fools,' yelled somebody in a sharp, quick, biznus-meanin' v'ice, 'n' all hands faced round to find the parson holding 'em up with another shotgun—own brother to the one the other cuss hed. 'I don't want a word out er yer,' he sed. 'Yer see my game now, don't yer? Thar ain't a gun in the house 'cept the ones you see, 'n' if any gent makes any row in this yer meetin' I'll fill his hide so plum full o' holes 't won't hold his bones. The kid will now take up the collection, 'n' ez it's the first one we ever hev taken up yer must make it a liber'l one, see?' The kid started out with a gunnysack, 'n' went through the very last man in the crowd. He took everything, even to the rings on our fingers. The parson hed the drop, 'n' we knew it 'n' never kicked, but jest giv' up our stuff like lambs.

"After the kid hed finished, he took the sack outside, 'n' thet's the last we ever seed o' him. Then the parson he sez: 'N' now, gents, I must say adoo, ez I must be a-travelin', for I hev another meetin' to attend this eve'. I want to say, tho', afore I go, thet you're the orneriest gang of ——— fools I ever played for suckers. A few friends uv mine hev taken the liberty, while yer've been to meetin' this blessed Chris'mus day, uv goin' through yer cabins 'n' diggin' up yer little caches uv dust 'n' uther val'ables. Yer stock hez all been stampeded, 'n' yer guns yer'll find somewhar at the bottom of the crick. My friend at the door will hold yer

level while I walk out, 'n' we will then keep yer quiet fer a few minutes longer through ther winder jest so 's we can git a nice cumf'table start; ' 'n' so they did. What c'u'd we do? The parson walked out, grinning all over himself, 'n' he 'n' his pals they nailed up the door 'n' winders (thar wuz only two), 'n' very soon after they hed finished we heerd the clatter o' huffs 'n' knowed they wuz gone.

"I must draw a veil over the rest uv thet day's purceed-in's, stranger. The langwidge used by ther boys wuz too awful to repeat; but 'twas jest ez this parson sed, when we got out o' thet meetin'-house we found every animal on the location gone, 'n' the only arms left wuz knives 'n' clubs; yet we'd hev gone after 'em with nothin' but our hands, but we couldn't follow afoot. How much did they get? I don't rightly know, but not fur frum fifty thousand. The hull camp wuz stone-broke, all excep' Ah Foo, 'n' he wuz the only one uv us as hed sense enuff not to tell thet durned parson whar he cached his stuff. Pete 'n' Five-Ace wuz so everlastin' hurt at the hull biznus that they shut up the 'Bird o' Prey,' borrowed Ah Foo's sack 'n' left for the Bay to try 'n' find thet parson; but they never did find him, 'n' no one ever heard uv him again."

A MAN'S CHOICE

BY LOUISE BEECHER

Though this be a satire on the good sense shown by man in his wooing, the masculine heart, at least, will not fail to commend the wisdom of the prince's choice. Written for Short Stories.

The prince was to choose a wife.

In the Rose-Garden were forty maidens, the noblest daughters of the kingdom. Some posed on the raised marble brim of the fountain; some walked, with regal tread, among the blossoms, in and out of the winding paths; and some, overcome by the perfume of the flowers, the excitement of the hour, dreading, yet longing, for the approach of the prince, sank upon the soft moss, and cooled their feverish cheeks on the dewy rose-petals.

Suddenly a murmur stole through the garden, borne on the wings of the bees and the breath of the wind! In the farthest corner it was known that the prince had come.

Quietly he entered, and his eyes, wandering from one fair face to another, ever pictured some fairer face, hidden from sight in the winding paths. Yet for each and all the prince had a graceful word, though one by one he passed them by. This lady knew nothing of music; that lady knew nothing of art; this one was too retiring, that one too forward; one too serious, another too light—and the prince's choice must be perfection! He was modest, and did not consider himself in any way perfect; but naturally a man, however frail he be, expects perfection in the woman who surrenders her life to his. Granting this, surely the prince, who was to confer great honor upon his wife, was justified in a careful search.

As he turned away from the fountain, the fluttering of a dainty dress, green, the color of the pale new shoots on the rose-trees, caught his eye. 'Twas only a momentary glimpse, for, whatever it was, it vanished so quickly that he fancied a waving branch must have deceived him.

A beautiful girl stood near; he spoke to her. She answered with easy grace. Yes, she played; her guitar was by the fountain. She could sing; the prince would hear her later. Just then a gleam of gold through the trees dazzled him; he could not tell whether it was the sunlight playing in fair hair or in the heart of a rose, and, though he turned

quickly into the next path again, there was nothing to be seen. As he passed on, a languid brunette paused at his approach—he stopped to speak with the dark-eyed beauty; but while the prince talked with her, he saw through the branches a slender figure clad in pale green, the color of the new shoots on the rose-trees. The neck and shoulders were daintier than any rose, and the pretty head glistened with a mass of golden hair. Instead of following the path, the prince parted the hedge and came suddenly upon this lady, who had until now so successfully eluded him. She was poised ready for flight, and the prince, who felt no inclination to seek further, caught her hand as if to detain her.

Such a slippery little hand! It stayed not a moment in his grasp, but the lady paused and looked up with some suggestion of mutiny in her deep eyes.

“I wish to speak with you,” said the prince.

The lady bowed.

“I wish to put my ring on your little hand.”

The lady's little hands slipped behind her.

“But I must talk with you first,” said the prince. He had become quite pale. “You know,” he continued nervously, “my father has given me a great and unusual privilege in this choice. He seeks my happiness and trusts my discretion. I must give him good and sufficient reason for the selection I make. Tell me of yourself! What are you besides the most enchanting of women? You sing? I have not heard your voice; it must be purest melody.”

No, she did not sing, but loved to hear the nightingales.

“Then you are fond of music? You play, of course?”

No, the lady did not play. She liked to hear the music of the wind and the water, but she had no patience with her guitar. No, she was not wise; the prince was mistaken. No, she was not noted for benevolence and charity. She was happy herself, and wanted her friends always to share in her happiness. But no! She was not wonderful in any way.

“But shall your lover be less to you than your friend?” cried the prince. “I am unhappy! Give me peace by telling me why I should choose you. You deny yourself every virtue and every grace. What are you? What can you do?”

“I am your choice, and I can love you. Is it enough?” she answered, smiling up at him.

And the prince put the ring upon her finger and kissed her.

A DRAMA IN NAPLES

Throughout this domestic tragedy of jealousy and revenge, the faithless wife, the contemptible lover, and the cold-blooded, relentless husband play their parts with great effect. From the Pall Mall Budget.

Arpino, the blind beggar, sat at his usual post, opposite the Palazzo Medina. For nearly three months he had never missed taking up his position there at ten o'clock in the morning, and he never left it till six. As he sat slightly forward, with his sinewy hands clasping his knees, and the yellowish whites of his sightless eyes upturned, the sun, which at Naples, even in April, has fierceness in it, flamed upon his lean, menacing head till the scalp's whiteness shone through the closely shorn red hair. A large plaster covered some sore on his right cheek. The man sat there so perfectly motionless that he might have been a lay figure. From morning to evening he never unclasped his hands from his knees, unless his quickness of hearing caught the approaching footsteps of a chance passer-by. Then Arpino extended one hand, and cried with a loud, monotonous cry, "For the pity of God!" He received a dole or no, as the case might be; but the yellowish whites of his upturned eyes remained fixed on the palazzo.

So fixed, indeed, was this upturned stare that tourists at first supposed that Arpino was really admiring that interesting piece of domestic architecture of the fifteenth century, attributed to Antonio Baboccio, with its inscription of 1406 over the doorway, as the date of its erection, with the lilies of Anjou, and the feathered pen, the armorial cognizance of its founders. But when the beggar, still with his upturned yellow eyes fixed upon the building, set up his loud monotonous cry, "For the pity of God!" the tourist stood corrected, perceiving that he was blind.

As the blind beggar sat there on this April morning, he became the subject of conversation to two ladies within the palazzo. Though it was as yet only midday, the Countess Medina had a visitor. The countess herself was a pale, elegant Florentine, with black hair and melancholy eyes. She was known in the great Neapolitan world for her rigid devoutness, and a strange spiritual expression about her meek eyebrows and forehead suggested that her thoughts were not of earth, and

recalled some of Rafaele's Madonnas. Some physical debility, or a shyness which she was unable to overcome, prevented her looking her guests straight in the face. Her voice was low and caressing, and in moments of excitement the pulse in her temples was seen to beat.

"So, mia cara," she said to her visitor and next-door neighbor, a painted butterfly of English fashion, who had married a Neapolitan Jew for his millions and pretended to be eternally regretting the step; "so," she said, "our poor, blind warden, Arpino, appears to you to be shocking!"

The Baroness Bravura, *née* Emily Trevor, who had the evening before returned from one of her annual visits to her native land more bigotedly English than ever, answered, smoothing some creases out of an exquisite silk gown:

"My dear, it's only in Italy that one can be confronted with such horrors."

"Poor Arpino! He would be pained if he heard you!"

"Of that I have no doubt. But why does the wretch plant himself just outside your gate?"

"Carissima, how should I know? Some beggar's whim!"

"I dare say. A whim prompted by rumors of your charity. Arpino, I will be bound, is amassing an independence."

"Well, his cry, 'For the pity of God!' hurts me. I always give him something when I go out."

"Arpino," said the Baroness Bravura, "will die in a villa. That is clear!" She rose from her seat, and, strolling indolently to the window, looked through the drawn blinds down into the sun-smitten street below. An intolerable glare devoured the Strada Banchi Nuovi. Passers-by moved languidly, sheltering themselves from the fierce heavens. But right opposite the palazzo, on the burning pavement, there Arpino sat in his eternal attitude; his gaunt hands clasping his knees; the yellow whites of his sightless eyes upturned. The baroness laughed sarcastically.

"Yes," she said, lounging back in the most comfortable armchair. "The steadfast sentinel is still at his post! But will he not be getting anxious? Has not the fulness of time come to throw him a lira?"

The countess looked at her guest reproachfully. "You are sarcastic," she said; "but that blind man has sat there so long before my doors—it is three months, I think, for he took

up his position some two weeks after my husband's return from Africa—that I have come to look upon him quite as a dependent! You will call me superstitious and laugh at me probably, but do you know that I should really look upon it as a bad omen if that blind beggar were to disappear from his customary seat before the Palazzo?"

"You really surprise me, my friend," said the baroness. "Were I in your place, nothing would please me better."

"Ah! but you do not know poor Arpino's qualifications. He is such an attractive beggar, hideous though he is. You smile, *mia biondina*; but the proof of what I say lies in the fact that people who never dream of giving to other beggars give to him! There is my husband, for instance," she went on—and here a certain unsteadiness showed itself in her voice. "May I trouble you for that fan, hanging on the wall, *carissima*? I thank you. The heat is insupportable. Well, the count always takes a great interest in Arpino whenever I speak of him."

"I confess I am surprised to hear it," said the baroness, yawning.

"Surprised you may well be, but it is true. Why, this very morning, before my husband started for Caserta, almost his last words at parting had reference to the blind beggar."

"H'm," says the baroness. Then she too began to fan herself languidly. Presently she asked, rather abruptly, how long the count would be at Caserta.

An unwonted vivacity appeared in the countess' tones as she replied.

"For a month certain," she said. "My estimable husband has gone to his country estate to superintend the sheep shearing. *Carissima*, in this sorrowful world we must be thankful for small mercies."

As she spoke, a beautiful, resigned smile lighted her worn face. The Baroness Bravura, however, threw off her apathy and answered with some warmth.

"Do you know," she said, "that I admire your husband?"

"*Cara bionda*, you were always singular."

"Possibly; but I admire your husband, all the same. He is so grim, so stern looking, so out of the common run of Italians, with that long, fixed gaze of his, which seems to tell of the privations he has undergone in the deserts. Then, that scar on his bronzed face where the lion clawed him

makes him additionally interesting! Yes, my friend, I envy you your husband."

"You! the universally admired wife of the greatest banker in Italy!"

"What is a banker to an African explorer? Antonio's sole idea is saving; and he has no figure. Your husband has at least a waist."

And being launched on this agreeable theme, the baroness passed some further criticisms on her absent financier. She finally concluded by saying that for so devout a Catholic the countess showed a quite unchristian discontent.

But at this remote allusion to religion, the countess' manner became chill. "You speak," she said, "of my husband without knowing him, and of my grievous burden without a conception of its weight. Ah, my friend, my husband is a brute! He is a brute! Let me tell you that. It is not only that he deserts me—that he goes out early every morning and comes back late every night. It is not only that. It is worse—much worse."

The baroness stared, and adjusted her *pince-nez*.

"Heh!" she asked, "has he beaten you?"

But the other made a gesture of denial, and her tones took a chilling gravity. "My husband is so impious," she said, with a slight shudder. "He is an infidel."

Now, the Baroness Bravura's attention was so engrossed on the efforts of her milliners as to leave her small leisure for investigating theological truths.

"That failing in a husband would not distress me much," she said. But the Countess Medina's manner became much like ice; and she looked at her flippant English friend austere. A superior pity shone from her grave dark eyes, and her hushed voice trembled, as the voice of one initiated speaking to the outcast of sacred things.

"My poor friend," she said, "knowing as I do that you have not yet found the true faith, I fear that I may not be able to make you understand my real suffering. Ah, bionda, if you could only be persuaded to see the real light!"

The Baroness Bravura, somewhat ostentatiously, applied to her tip-tilted nose an exquisite lace handkerchief in which a miniature powder puff lay hid.

"Let us hear this real suffering," she said.

"My real suffering, a suffering hidden from the world,"

the countess said, "but which is eating my heart out, is this: my husband, not content with being an infidel himself, insists on trying to force his infidelity on me."

"Ah!"

"Like all men without religion, he hates the sight of a priest. He is always offending my ears with a quotation from some infidel French poet. 'A priest is a cat,' he says. 'When I see a priest, I feel myself a dog.'"

"Ah!"

"Ever since he returned suddenly from Africa three months ago, he has forbidden me to attend confession."

The Baroness Bravura raised herself slightly in her arm-chair and again adjusted her *pince-nez*.

"My friend," she said, "was your confessor handsome?"

"Ah, you hurt me!" cried the countess.

A silence fell between these two—a silence painful and prolonged. The baroness, consummate woman of the world as she was, felt that she had outraged her friend's religious feelings so deeply that for the moment it would be wisest to sit still and say and do nothing.

But as these two sat motionless in the subdued light of the boudoir, outside there, below, in the terrible glare of the Strada Banchi Nuovi, another, seemingly up to now eternally immobile, was suddenly stirred to action. At the sound of light, swift footsteps coming toward him on the deserted pavement, Arpino, the blind beggar, who still kept the yellow whites of his upturned eyes riveted on the palazzo, raised his head abruptly. His mustache bristled.

"For the pity of God!" he cried in his monotonous voice, and with his accustomed action extended his open hand. This hand shook. The light, swift footsteps were stayed, and a low, sweet voice sounded in the beggar's ears.

"Afflicted brother, have you long been blind?"

"For ten years, my father."

"Are you stone blind?"

"Stone blind, my father."

"How came you to know that a priest spoke to you?"

"Who but a priest would call the outcast an afflicted 'brother'?"

"The blessings of Heaven support you in your affliction, my son."

A lira note was placed in Arpino's hand, and the light, swift

footsteps passed on; passed on, and mingled with the crowd, and died into indistinctness in the many-voiced murmurs of the street. But Arpino listened. There was something almost menacing in the blind man's attitude of strained intentness. Even his hearing, however, preternaturally quickened as it was by his other affliction, could not have traced the course of those light, swift footsteps as they passed up the street, crossed it at the top, then came down the other side and glided into the Palazzo Medina! It is true that Arpino's fixed, upturned yellow eyes were riveted on the palazzo as those light, steps entered it. But, then, Arpino was blind.

As this episode terminated in the scorching street below, the awkward silence which had reigned in the countess' boudoir was broken.

"Well," says the Baroness Bravura, "I have offended you, I see! So that the best thing I can do is to take my leave, after having first admired your new ornaments."

The countess' boudoir was in truth a perfect bric-à-brac shop, exquisitely furnished, for the absent count had taste and was a great collector. Marvellous inlaid cabinets occupied corners, and their open doors permitted an inspection of European masterpieces in the art of miniature. Amid other fine pictures on the walls hung a Correggio which the directors of the National Museum had vainly tried to buy. Mementos of the absent count's wanderings in strange countries mingled grotesquely with these objects of vertu. Here hung a brightly painted bow and a bunch of poisoned arrows from the Orinoco. Here a deadly club, which had been wielded in Central African forests, supported a quantity of talismans which had once perhaps belonged to the club's owner. In one corner of the room a large, heavy ebony chest stood open, whose contents still further recalled Africa, for the magnificent lion's skin hanging half in and half out of it seemed to catch all the concentrated light in this dim boudoir, and was shown to striking advantage.

The Baroness Bravura's attention was attracted to this skin, which she had never seen before; and the countess, who had recovered from her displeasure, was languidly informing her that it had once belonged to the Nubian lion whose claws had disfigured one side of her husband's face, when the sound of shoes creaking apologetically was heard, and a decorously dressed fat man deferentially entered the

room. This was Sorra, the confidential servant of the family. He was a man with short-clipped black whiskers, white, podgy face, a bald, shining head, and black eyebrows raised over half-closed eyes. His manner was exceedingly grave, as of one performing sacred functions. This man eyed the Baroness Bravura corner-wise, and, approaching the countess with almost a religious air, handed her a note on a silver salver.

The pulses in the Countess Medina's temples beat violently. She took the note with a nervous movement, and as she said, "Very well, Sorra," her voice fluttered.

The steward bowed and departed, reverent and dignified as ever. The sound of the creaking shoes died decorously in the corridor.

"Ah," said the Baroness Bravura, "you expect some one?" But the countess replied with a sort of nervous irritation, and forcing her unsteady glance to meet the baroness' eyes:

"No! I expect no one."

"All the same, I shall go," said the baroness, and she lounged to the window once more, buttoning her gloves.

The countess, standing behind her with both hands on her shoulders, said: "Well, carissima, do come and see me again to-morrow. It always seems to me that you are bringing me luck—what is it?" she asked as the baroness, who was looking out of the window, gave a little start.

"Well," said the baroness, "if I bring you luck, it's a fortunate thing that I have returned to Naples, since one of your luck-bringers has deserted you."

"What do you mean?"

"The blind beggar has vanished!"

"Arpino gone!" cried the countess. "Impossible!" She in her turn looked out of the window. "Why, for three months he has never moved."

"Well, he's moved now," said the baroness. Then noticing that the countess' face had fallen, she said, shaking both her hands, and kissing her: "You must take care of yourself, my dear. Do you know, you look to me as if your nerves were going wrong."

The countess shook her head, and smiled the sad, resigned smile of a saintly woman who suffers; then the jangle of the Baroness Bravura's innumerable bracelets and bangles died gradually in the track of Sorra's creaking shoes.

This dignitary was waiting below to show the visitor out.

He loathed the English, and, being a Neapolitan born and bred, was utterly unable to understand how any woman who had a carriage could walk to the next house.

Having, therefore, followed the baroness' retreating footsteps with a disdainful eye, he retired to his sanctum—a small room off the entrance going into the courtyard—and, having taken a glass of Vesuvio and lighted a black cigar, stretched himself in an arm-chair, prepared equally for sleep or contemplation.

"I shall not be wanted for the rest of the morning; that is clear," he said to himself. A significant smile played about his fat lips. He smoked his cigar lazily till it went out, and presently he fell into a stertorous siesta.

From this sleep he was awakened by the light pressure of a hand upon his shoulder and the sound of a low voice in his ear—but a voice which to him sounded so dreadfully that he started up trembling like a man in a palsy, and with the sweat standing out on his forehead.

"Eccellenza," he babbled, "we thought you were at Caserta." Count Medina, a tall, gaunt man, with a bristling mustache pointed upward and a fixed, penetrating eye, smiled good-humoredly.

He was dressed quietly in a frock coat and tall hat, like an English gentleman. The scar from the lion's claw on his white cheek showed up very white.

"I have delayed my departure to Caserta," he said, still smiling gravely at his servant's astonishment. "I have made up my mind to remove my whole household there—at once."

"To remove your whole household to Caserta, eccellenza! and at once?"

"Yes, my good Sorra. There are rumors of cholera in Naples. Make all preparations to start in an hour. The order is somewhat sudden, possibly, but I do not know why you should look so surprised." He toyed with his eyeglass, breathing on it. Then he asked carelessly:

"Is the countess at home?"

"Yes, eccellenza. No. Yes—that is, shall I go and see?"

"I will not trouble you, good Sorra; I will go and see for myself. Meanwhile stir yourself. Lock up everything below here, and bring the keys to me in madame's boudoir."

He went upstairs calmly, according to his usual fashion;

but when he was within three steps of the landing which gave on to the boudoir a nervous trembling suddenly seized his knees, and he fell forward, striking his cane sharply against the top of the marble stair.

He had scarcely risen when the boudoir door was opened violently, and his wife showed herself in the entrance.

Her face looked very white in the doorway there; and the pulse in her temples, her husband noticed, was beating fast. But she came forward impulsively, smiling, surprised, yet glad to see him.

"Luigi!" she said. "Back so soon!"

"Ah, Adelina!"

As she stood before him rather awkwardly in the corridor, he stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

As his lips touched her flesh, the count heard a low, dull click from the boudoir.

"Come," he said, moving toward her room, "I have something to tell you."

They entered the boudoir, both smiling, and sat down. There was a pause.

"Well," said the countess, "what is your news?"

He repeated quite casually what he had said to the steward below, stretching himself slightly in his arm-chair as he spoke.

"I have made up my mind to move the whole household at once to Caserta. There are rumors of cholera in Naples. I have given orders to the servants below. And I want you to be ready to start in an hour."

He spoke quite casually, but his fixed glance fell on the ebony chest. Its lid was closed. The countess intercepted his glance. She twitched in her chair. Presently she said deprecatingly, "Surely it will be very dull at Caserta."

"The country is looking lovely," the count replied, smiling. Then he added, "As the train goes in an hour, my heart, will you not go and prepare yourself for the journey?"

"I am rather tired. I should like Anita to bring my things down here."

"By all means." He rose and rang the bell. In a moment or two, which the count passed in rolling a cigarette, Anita appeared; received her order to bring her mistress' things down, and to prepare herself for travelling; and departed, astounded. As she left the boudoir, Sorra entered it. The fat steward's eyes were dazed. He seemed to see

nobody, and he stumbled in his walk. His agitation was too manifest to pass unnoticed.

"Dear me," the count says, "it is certain that there is something diabolically unwholesome in Naples indeed! I have never seen such pale faces! We had better hurry away as quickly as possible." He looked from the steward to his wife. Her eye was troubled; but a broad, idiotic smile was fixed on her lips. Then he turned to the steward again.

"Have you locked up all the treasures in the dining-room and study, Sorra?"

"Si, eccellenza."

"Very well, then you had better lock up everything here in the boudoir. . . . Begin, man, and be quick!"

The steward's complexion turned livid. He seemed for a moment unable to move. He shuffled with his feet, and looked piteously at the countess. But the Countess Medina seemed to see nothing. Stretched back in an arm-chair, and white as death, she smiled idiotically. The count lighted a cigarette.

"Well, Sorra," he said simply, "what is all this delay about?" Then the steward shambled forward, his shoes creaking tremendously in the silence, to the open cabinet on one side of the fireplace. He fumbled awhile and locked that. Then he locked the cabinet on the other side of the fireplace; then he locked a heavy mediæval cupboard standing against the wall opposite the windows. Then he made a hurried sort of obeisance and shuffled toward the door. The woman lying in the arm-chair let an involuntary sigh escape her.

"You had better lock the ebony chest, Sorra," said the count. "Quite apart from the skin of the lion which disfigured me, there are curios in it."

The countess raised herself out of her chair, stiff and stark. She looked like a woman who had died suddenly with a grin upon her lips. She said nothing. She simply looked at the closed ebony chest.

"Stay, Sorra," said the count—the trembling steward was already on his knees, trying to fit the key into the lock. "Stay," the count said; "the countess, I think, wants to take something out of the chest."

But she shook her head, and sank back in her old attitude—a woman turned suddenly to stone, in an arm-chair

"No," says the count; "I am mistaken! Her excellency does not wish to take anything out of the chest. . . . Then lock it, good Sorra, lock it."

The key screamed as it turned. There was silence. Then, as Sorra scrambled to his knees again, looking ashen, the count held out his hand.

"Now give me the keys," he said; "and bring some wine and sandwiches, that we may have a little something before we start."

He put the keys into his pocket.

Half an hour afterward Sorra came to say that the carriage was ready to take them to the station.

"Good," says the count, cheerfully. He gave his arm to his wife, who was dressed for travelling and closely veiled. As she seemed unable of her own strength to stand upon her feet, at the count's request Sorra supported his mistress on the other side. In this way they moved to the door. Arrived here, the count said:

"Are all the servants gone before, Sorra?"

"Yes, your excellency. Every one save ourselves has left the house."

"Well, then," said the count, "since we have only bare time to catch the train, we had better leave it too."

He locked the boudoir door on the outside and put the key into his pocket. Below, he locked the front door, always with the same mechanical action of indifference, then stepped into the carriage, and sat by his wife's side. "To the station," he said.

The next morning, urgent telegrams brought two of the first consulting physicians out to Caserta by the earliest train. They found the countess in imminent danger of curdling of the blood; and went to inquire of the count as to what catastrophe could have dealt their patient such a shock. The count professed ignorance.

"Cannot the patient enlighten you?" he asked.

"The countess cannot be persuaded to speak a word."

"Ah!" said the count, "I think that my wife will recover."

The doctors could not quite follow this inference; but, being Neapolitans, they suspected something, prescribed, shrugged their shoulders, and departed.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the chief of the Neapolitan police, a little, shriveled, yellow-complexioned man,

wearing gold spectacles, behind which a pair of hawk's eyes gleamed, drove up to the count's villa. These two men had been friends since they were schoolboys, had campaigned, and made love together.

"Good morning, my friend," said the chief of the police, not alighting; "I am afraid I must ask you to climb into my carriage and return to the station with me. Your presence in Naples is imperative, and we shall catch the next train."

"Since my presence in Naples is imperative," said the count, "I am with you," and mounted into the carriage without a word.

They talked bagatelles till they were alone in a first-class compartment. Then the chief of the police said suddenly:

"A young priest has been missing in Naples since yesterday morn."

"So much the better," said the count. "It's but another cat lost."

The chief of the police smiled. He, too, was anti-clerical. But presently he fixed his piercing eyes on his old companion-in-arms, and went on. "The fact is, my friend, that your next-door neighbor, the Baroness Bravura, alleges that she has heard groans and cries proceeding from your unoccupied palace. She is, in point of fact, certain that somebody is shut-up there."

"That cannot be," said the count, "for I locked up the palazzo myself, and before I did so, to my certain knowledge, all the servants had left."

"No doubt," said the chief of the police, "the Baroness Bravura's suspicions are absurd! Indeed, I may tell you that I listened intently for some time when she called me in, but heard nothing. But, perhaps, considering the social standing of the fair alarmist, who continues so importunate, it would be best if a private search was made by the police."

"By all means," said the count.

On arriving at the chief of the police's offices in Naples, the two friends found the Baroness Bravura in a high state of tension, anxiously awaiting their return. She implored the chief of the police to make haste.

"You will not need me," said the count, "since you know the palazzo well. Here are the keys. Search as God lets you! I and the baroness will await your discoveries here."

They waited nearly three hours. Then the chief of the

police reappeared, rubbing his hands softly, and with the expression on his face of a man who has sounded mysteries.

He waved the impetuous baroness aside courteously and led the count to a distant window.

"He is dead," he said. "We found him lying on his face with his teeth buried in his arm."

"Whom may you be talking about?" says the count.

"The missing priest. He was in the ebony chest when you locked it."

"Ah! I recollect now that Mme. la Comtesse seemed anxious that I should not lock that ebony chest."

"My friend," said the chief of the police, "between ourselves this is an infernal vengeance that you have taken! But the Church, no doubt in her own interests, wishes the matter hushed up."

"For once I am with the Church."

But here the Baroness Bravura, unable to restrain her curiosity any longer, broke in upon this conclave.

"Ah, you have found something! I was sure you would! What did you find?"

"The dead body of my wife's favorite cat," said the count. "The poor brute was locked in, it seems, by mistake."

"How horrible!" cried the Baroness Bravura, who worshipped animals, and went out.

The two friends stood silent for a time, eyeing each other. Then the Chief of the Police said suddenly:

"The police know much in Naples, but they do not know all. They do not, for instance, know who Arpino, the blind beggar, was, or where he has gone to!"

"Ah!" said the count, "no one knows more about Arpino, the blind beggar, than myself."

"In fact, you were Arpino! . . . Ah, my friend, you must have grown weary of waiting opposite that palazzo of yours. An almost three-months vigil! Saprìsti!"

The Count Medina looked fixedly at the chief of police.

"Punishment is slow, but it comes!" he said calmly, as he lighted a cigar.

THE MAKING OF A WARRIOR

BY FRANCIS PRESTON FRÉMONT, U. S. A.

In this picture a desert stretches out before us ; while the figures on the canvas are a prospector leading his tired horse and a lurking Indian boy, with murder in his heart and a vision of glory before his eyes.

The sun is high in the heavens. Cloudless, the turquoise sky limits the burning plain. Drifted heaps of glistening sand show from what direction came the last fiery gale that uncovered those dissevered polished bones—mute witnesses of unquenched thirst—and with rough hands readjusted the winding-sheet that covers the blunted features of the desert.

Black rocks, remnants of long dead volcanic fires, raise their riven crests above the sea of sand, fit home for deadly snake and insect. Near by, winds a half-obliterated trail.

From the wavering horizon a figure emerges, slowly approaching and taking form and color; a man leading a pack-horse laden with a prospector's belongings—slung to the saddle, a rifle awaits the owner's hand. Slowly the tired man leads the tired beast; at the cliffs they stop. The water keg is unlashed from the pack, the miner's hat serves for a pail, and with many a kindly word the journey is resumed.

Friends, these two, alone in this waste of sand and sky.

Listen! What vibrant sound? what hiss stirred the dead air? No snake's alarm! that arrow quivering in the falling form—that bronzed figure among the rocks with tense bow and ready shaft—tell the brief story.

The man lies motionless. Soon the packhorse is unloaded, and the little all that a few moments ago belonged to the motionless one is scattered on the sands. With grave curiosity the Indian boy examines the unfamiliar things and selects those that please his fancy. The rifle lies across his knees. Then the hunter examines his quarry, and leaves it, reft of the Indian's token of conquest.

His work is done: when the sun rose he was an unnoticed boy, armed with a bow and arrows; now he is an Apache warrior! created by his own act, his title parchment a scalp.

Up a wooded cañon disappears an Indian boy, beating the exhausted horse, that he rides, with the bow he no longer values. Out on the lonesome desert, the drifting sand has resumed its never-ending task of covering and uncovering.

NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS

BY JOHN HABBERTON

In this comedy of errors we read of social aspirations and good intentions blighted by repeated and discouraging rebuffs. We have also a graphic description of the capture of a burglar, and the stirring manner in which a determined little man stormed his way into the good graces of his recalcitrant neighbors. Copyright, 1891, by the Authors' Alliance.

When Zenas Bortley moved from the city to a suburban village, in search of better air for the children and for his own asthmatic lungs, he told his wife that now she could have the pleasure of knowing her next-door neighbors—an experience she never had been granted in the city. Mrs. Bortley, born and reared in a thickly settled portion of the metropolis, believed her husband's statement, for had not Zenas always been a country boy until he came to New York to make his fortune? Had he not described to her, again and again, the ideal society of his native village of Grasshopper Falls, where everybody knew everybody else—where one man was as good as another so long as he earned his living, paid his bills and went to church on Sunday, and where every woman was a lady if she had a black silk dress, no matter how plain, in which to receive calls? Had not Zenas' own mother, wife of the bookkeeper of the local lumber company, been asked by the congressman's wife to help entertain some distinguished guests from another State? And it had been so delightful when Mrs. Zenas had been ill or feeble, in her little flat in the city, to hear her husband tell how in the country any man whose wife was feeling poorly could borrow a neighbor's carriage or sleigh and take the dear woman out for an airing. Mrs. Zenas never had an outing except in a horse-car, for her husband, though strong in affection and self-sacrifice, had but a small salary, and the olive-branches which were the family's only riches always needed something which cost about as much as a carriage for an hour or two.

So the Bortleys went to the country, and a blessed change they found it. The children began to grow like weeds, their mother's cheeks became fuller of roses than the garden, and Zenas himself, though he was obliged to breakfast early and sup late in order to make a full day at the store in which he was entry clerk, found his asthma disappearing with unex-

pected rapidity. His cottage cost less per month than a city flat; he had a little garden which, thanks to his boyhood's experience, yielded many vegetables which tasted better than any he had ever bought from a grocer; the children had a swing under an old apple-tree and rolled in the grass to their hearts' content; the pastor of a church called after seeing the heads of the family in his congregation, and Zenas was invited to join the local club of his political party, and also to subscribe to a course of lectures to be delivered in the local Academy of Music during the following winter.

Yet Zenas was not happy. The neighborly affiliation which he had promised his wife did not come about. He waited for it a few weeks, for he was a dignified little fellow, and had some knowledge of the manners of good society, but when his wife reminded him that the summer had nearly passed and no one had called who had not some semi-business purpose, he informed himself, with a mighty pull at all his faculties, that something ought to be done. What most irritated him was that his next-door neighbor, a handsome woman whose husband, so the agent of Bortley's cottage had said, would be obliged to be away from home for some time, had never called. Mrs. Maytham, the lady in question, was distinguished looking as well as handsome; her house was a palace compared with the house which Zenas had hired, and she drove almost daily behind a fine pair of horses. She was a good woman too, or Zenas was no judge of human nature, and as she had no children, the little man, who could not imagine that any one regarded boys and girls except with the adoration which he bestowed upon his darlings, was sure that if Mrs. Maytham could know his brood, she would in her loneliness have an unfailing source of consolation. As for Mrs. Bortley, Zenas' loyal soul profoundly pitied any one and every one who did not know that estimable woman.

Yet the two women did not become acquainted. Mrs. Maytham did not call, and, when Mrs. Bortley felt hurt, her husband suggested that perhaps the older resident was from one of the Southern States, in which calls must first be made by new-comers upon the old families. Mrs. Bortley acted upon this suggestion, but was unfortunate enough to select an hour when her neighbor was out. She made a supplementary effort when her husband explained that country people usually became acquainted by borrowing small necessities

from one another; but, when Mrs. Bortley begged the loan of a cup of ground coffee one morning, she saw only her neighbor's servant, and the same result attended the payment of the loan. In vain, too, did she display her children, who really were pretty and well dressed, when her neighbor walked alone through the well-kept garden which the Bortleys coveted for its rare display of flowers; Mrs. Maytham seemed to ignore the very existence of the well-behaved children, for whom an emperor might have been glad to exchange his crown.

Zenas, however, had no idea of giving up, and the unexpected lack of new acquaintances—a peculiarity of suburban villages—added to his determination to know his nearest neighbor. While watering his late lettuce one Saturday afternoon, and felicitating himself upon his success during hot weather with this succulent but capricious vegetable, he suddenly climbed a tree and inspected his neighbor's kitchen garden. Just as he had suspected, the only lettuce there had run to seed. In a moment Zenas was upon the ground again and pulling some finely blanched plants, which he took to his neighbor's kitchen door, saying to the cook:

"I hope I don't intrude, but good lettuce is scarce at this time of the year, and as mine is very fine I thought perhaps your mistress would enjoy some."

The servant took the crisp present without a word. After moving several steps toward home, Zenas stopped suddenly to admire a brilliant clump of tritomas. As he stood gazing, he heard a window blind open and a voice calling, in a low tone:

"Bridget?"

"Mem?"

"Who was that?"

"Misther Bortley, mem."

"The owner of that gang next door?"

"Yes, mem."

"Umph!" The last expression was emphasized by so vigorous a closing of the window blind that the catch fastened with a sharp snap. A moment before, Zenas had felt bent as well as short; a moment after, the wound to his pride had straightened him until, as he strode across the fence, he felt as tall as Goliath of Gath. He hastened to the house to tell his wife, but he checked himself. He adored that wife of

his; he always was encompassing her with his love, that she might be shielded from the slings and darts of an unappreciative world; she should not know that any one had alluded to her and her nestlings as a "gang."

Yet his own heart grew sore as it was chafed by the word, which could not be forgotten. The expression and the tone in which it was uttered came to him unbidden in his dreams and roused him from needed rest—came to him as he read the morning paper while dashing by rail to the city—came to him as he added columns of figures at his desk, and caused him to make some terrible blunders. "Gang!" Although he was a mild-mannered man, and a member of the church besides, he came to regard his next-door neighbor, woman and handsome though she was, with deadly hatred. So intense did his dislike become, that he sat in his window, one sultry moonlight night, and gleefully beheld a stray cow enter the Maytham garden and do more damage than any florist could undo at that season. "Gang," indeed!

In fact it was more with joy than sorrow that, one day, Zenas learned from a chance acquaintance on the train, that there were special reasons why Mr. Maytham would be away from home for some time, for the man was a defaulter, and fleeing from justice. The Bortleys agreed that it was providential that the families had not become acquainted; for although Zenas, like a good man, tried to pity sinners while he hated sin, he told his wife that a mere entry clerk, with a family dependent upon him, could not afford to be known as an acquaintance of a defaulter's family. Everybody seemed "down on" the Maythams; people said it was only because the house was in the wife's name that Mrs. Maytham had a roof over her head—that the couple had not lived there long, and never had become acquainted in the village, anyway.

Though he still was full of bitterness, Zenas began to be interested anew in his handsome neighbor, for he never before had seen the wife of a criminal—one of Mrs. Maytham's class. Crimes had been committed at Grasshopper Falls, and wives of thieves and rowdies were too numerous, as occasional subscriptions for their relief showed, but they were a shabby, forlorn, characterless set, just like their husbands, while here, in the very next house to Zenas, was a criminal's wife who was handsome, self-contained, proud, apparently rich, and even scornful of the honest. "Gang!"

Zenas thought of Mrs. Maytham until he became almost fascinated by her. His eye sought her each day as he left home and returned. Finally, when he got his customary summer vacation of a fortnight, he spent hours of each day in a hammock under the trees, looking slyly for Mrs. Maytham, and following her with his eyes whenever she sauntered through her finely kept grounds. He was sorry for her; he could understand why she did not care to make new acquaintances; he could not see anything in her face that indicated complicity in her husband's crime; he so pitied her in her loneliness and probable gloom that he prayed earnestly for her—but do what he would he could not forget the tone in which she had called his adorable family a "gang."

As the dog-days dragged on, Zenas' hammock under the trees became more and more attractive as a lounging-place, until finally the little man, who had often slept out of doors in the woods when he was a country boy, ventured to be young again and spend an occasional night in his hammock. The first effort was quite successful, but during the second night he was roused by an awful dream of an anaconda gliding through the grass near him, and causing a rustle such as any meandering anaconda could be depended upon to make. Starting up in a fright beneath his low-hanging covert of boughs, he saw what at first seemed really a huge serpent about to cross the fence and enter the Maytham estate; through well-rubbed eyes, however, the monster resolved itself into a ladder, evidently brought from a house in course of building not far away. Of course the ladder was not moving of its own volition; a man was under it.

Zenas was at once as wide awake as if no such condition as sleep had ever existed; he also was in abject terror, and was conscious of the outbreak of the cold sweat of which he often had heard but never before experienced. What should he do? What could he do? Pshaw! Perhaps the man was a carpenter, who had been after a bit of his own property, to have it ready for use somewhere else. But no, the clock of one of the village churches struck two just then; it was impossible that any honest mechanic could be going to work at that time of night, brightly though the moon shone. Maybe the fellow was a fruit-tree plunderer—Zenas had been warned to gather his own early pears if he did not wish the tree to

be denuded, some moonlight night, by unbidden gatherers. Well, if the man were bent on stealing fruit from the Maytham place, let him steal; it was a shame that such things should be, but Zenas was not one of the village's three policemen, and, as he would rather have his own single pear-tree stripped than attack a midnight prowler, he could not be expected to protect his neighbor's property—the property of a neighbor who had called his family a “gang.”

But horrors! The man was no fruit thief, for he had taken the ladder toward the Maytham house—placed it in the shadow cast by the moon, and stood motionless a moment, as if to rest. Evidently he was a burglar, and knew his business, for it was town talk that the Maytham house was expensively furnished, and contained much solid silverware, besides a great deal of bric-à-brac worth its weight in gold. Probably the windows, inside the blinds, were wide open—all country windows were, during the dog-days. Let that ladder once be raised, and the thief at its top, and Zenas was sure that the frail blinds would prove no obstacle to the fellow's wicked designs.

But what could the unsuspected observer do? He could not move toward his own house without being seen and heard; even were he within his doors he had no firearms, no telephone, no burglar alarm. He might slip out, through the shadows, to his gate and thence to the local police station, nearly a mile away; but before an officer could come, the robbery would be accomplished. Worse still, the fellow, flushed by success, might move the ladder across the fence and enter the Bortley home. True, Zenas owned no valuables except his wife and children, but the thought of a ruffian prowling about his sanctuary was not to be endured for an instant. Could he scare the fellow away by making a noise? Perhaps, but he had heard of burglars who ran right at a noise instead of away from it. Should the burglar attack him, there would be nothing to do but give up the ghost at once, for his heart was already in his throat, and he felt unable to move hand or foot. And his life was insured for only a thousand dollars!

Terror and excitement had made him so wild that exhaustion speedily followed, with its consequent apathy. Even his conscience followed the lead of his will and became utterly demoralized. It was too bad, on general principles, that a house should be robbed, but that particular house, probably

furnished with the wages of Maytham's crime—well, the little man recalled, without a bit of shame, and to his great satisfaction, the infamous old saying that "The second thief is the best owner." And really—this as his conscience attempted to rally—might not spoliation be a judgment upon the woman who had been so blind, insensate, and brutal as to call the Bortley family—the larger and better part of it—a "gang"?

But why all this worry and terror? Probably the man was after all only a common fruit thief. Only a few feet from where the ladder had been dropped was a great tree of "strawberry" apples, which the Bortley children had been eying wistfully for a fortnight, as the blush on the fruit had deepened to crimson. Such apples commanded a high price, as Bortley had learned to his sorrow. Well, if the tree were robbed, his children would be delivered from further temptation; such trees were not safe when *he* was a boy. He recalled, with a wicked chuckle which was almost audible, how he once had braved bulldog and shotgun to despoil just such a tree. Perhaps a tree of apples might not seem worth much to that proud woman——

Just then the man began to raise the ladder, not to the apple-tree, but against the side of the house. At the same instant Bortley's heart and head began to throb as if they would burst. He feared heart disease and apoplexy. He closed his eyes and tried to think of something else. What was in his mind a moment before? Oh, yes—that proud woman—woman—woman——

In an instant the little fellow slipped out of the hammock, and, with jaws tightly set and nerves and muscles like bundles of steel wires, had bounded across the fence and toward his neighbor's house. Short though the distance was, he had time, as he ran, to realize that his wits had never before been so clear since the night he proposed to the angelic girl who afterward became his wife. The ladder had touched the wall, making considerable noise, but the burglar did not seem to mind this, for he already had a foot on the lowest round, when Zenas, springing in front of him, gave the ladder a push and shake that threw it backward. The unknown man sprang off quickly, but in an instant Zenas had him by the throat, and, bearing him backward, got him upon the ground. For a moment or two there was a fierce struggle; then the man, appearing to yield, turned on his side. Zenas, fearing

he had killed the fellow, relaxed his grasp, but in an instant he saw a hand drawing a pistol from a jacket pocket. Quickly the weapon was wrested away and tossed aside, and the struggle by natural arms began again. Zenas recalled, as if by magic, all the long-forgotten fistic lore of the schoolyard and village green; but his antagonist was larger than he, so the little fellow devoted himself to dodging, and even some skill at this art did not entirely save him. First he became conscious that he could not breathe through his nose; then he lost the sight of one eye, and his chest ached dreadfully, but he availed himself of another youthful trick, practised by small boys who were attacked by bullies—he got behind his antagonist and secured a tight collar-grip with both hands, brought up his knee sharply against the burglar's back, and quickly had the fellow securely pinned to the ground.

While the struggle had been going on, Zenas heard window blinds open, and a startled exclamation in a voice he remembered well—the voice that had uttered the word “gang.” Now, as he tried to breathe, he heard a soft rustle, and, looking up, saw clad all in white, and with hair dishevelled, his handsome neighbor.

“Madam, this—this burglar—tried to get into—your house. I saw him—he tried to shoot me. His pistol is somewhere—in the grass. Find it, please—fire it—fast—make an alarm—bring help.”

But the woman, instead of looking for the weapon, fell upon her knees, looked at as much of the man's face as was visible, and moaned:

“O Arthur!”

Then she sprang to her feet and hissed rapidly:

“He's no burglar, man. Let him go—do you hear me? He's no burglar, I say. He is my husband.”

“Your husband!” gasped Zenas, relaxing his hold—a movement of which the prostrate man endeavored to take advantage.

“Yes—yes! Hasn't a man a right to enter his own house any way he chooses, when he's not expected—has no key? Let him go. Don't you hear me say he is my husband?”

“Yes, madam, and sorry I am to hear it, for I've heard of your husband's——”

“Agnes,” moaned the captive, “find my pistol—quick—and shoot the fellow. Put it close to his arm and fire; then break

the other in the same way—that will make the devil loose his hold. I hear men running—they are coming this way.”

“Help! Murder! Help!” roared Zenas, who also heard quick footsteps on a sidewalk not far away. Then he said quickly: “Madam, before you can find that pistol, I can kill this man, with my hands at his throat. I’ve had to fight savage animals with my hands.”

“God have mercy!” exclaimed the woman, again dropping on her knees beside the two men. “Listen to me, man! As God lives, my husband is innocent of the charges against him—I know he is—I know all the facts. He’s the victim of a conspiracy that must be exposed before long. He has risked everything to-night for the sake of seeing his wife—his wife, do you hear me? Imagine yourself in his place—for your wife’s sake—for the one person alive who trusts you——”

“It’s no use, Agnes,” groaned the man. “The fellow’s a brute. Those men are almost here—I’m too weak to run far if I try—I’m gone.”

“O God!” the woman moaned, “has Heaven no mercy for the innocent?”

Zenas looked into the face before him—a woman’s upturned face, full of agony, the moon shining so full upon it that its every line was visible. Then he said softly and quickly:

“Yes, madam; Heaven *has* mercy, as man will show you.” He relaxed his hold and thrust a hand into his pocket, continuing to talk fast—

“Mr. Maytham, you say you’re too weak to run far; you won’t be safe in your own house—hurry into mine—here’s the key to the back door—go upstairs as softly and as far as you can—there’s nobody on the top floor, and there’s light enough in the halls for you to see your way. Don’t make a noise, or you’ll rouse my family. Now’s your chance—knock me aside and hurry across the fence—quick. Go softly—on your toes—keep in the shadow.”

Away sped Maytham, and Zenas continued, as two men came hurrying into the garden gate:

“Remember, madam—’twas a burglar—he ran across my back yard—he hurt me badly—you’re trying to restore me—make them help you—don’t let them take me into my house till I’m restored——”

Then, for the men were almost upon him, that good little

man played hypocrite with consummate ability. He begged the men not to leave him, bade them see how terribly injured he was, sent Mrs. Maytham into her house for water and stimulants, and told the story of the attempted burglary at great length, until one of the men said:

"Well, I 'spose 'taint no use to try to find the feller now—he's got too much start. It's only by chance we followed him any way. I thort I heard a ladder bein' took from a house next me. 'Thieves,' says I to myself. I peeked out of winders one side an' another; then I woke Brother Jim, an' him an' me went out kinder keerful like. We could see in the moonlight where the ladder had been dragged along in the dust of the road. Comin' round a bend we thort we heerd it hit somethin'—ladders allus make a noise when they bump a wooden house, an' it's a kind o' noise you can hear a good way in a still night like this. We began to run then, an' when we heerd the hollerin' we knowed where to come."

"So good of you," whispered Mrs. Maytham.

"Ever so much obliged," said Zanes. Then, realizing for the first time that Mrs. Maytham was not in daylight attire, he whispered something to the men, who abruptly turned, said "Good-night," and went away.

"Mr. Bortley," said the woman, seizing her neighbor's hands, "you are a noble man."

"Madam," said the little man, who in spite of a broken nose and closed eye now felt himself the equal of any one alive, "you are a true woman. Try to feel easy about your husband. He will be safer in my house than in his own, until we see how the authorities regard the burglar story. They *can't* suspect me—with this face."

Then he turned quickly and entered his house. Softly he went up the stairs and searched the top floor, light in hand, until he found the fugitive, to whom he whispered:

"Take the room with the bed in it. Turn the key, so none of my children happen in on you in the morning. I'll arrange for your wife to come in—I'll get *my* wife and the youngsters off some way after breakfast, and we haven't any servants to poke around. Good-night."

Then the little man proceeded to bury himself in his own reflections and a wet towel with a lump of ice in it. With a clearer head than he ever had taken to his desk in the city he, nevertheless, had many conflicting emotions. Within a

single hour—a mere quarter of an hour, indeed, he had been guilty of cowardice, suspicion, heartlessness, and several other unpardonable sins; he also had indulged in violence, dissimulation, and a threat to commit murder or at least manslaughter. He had imagined himself dying of fright; he had fought a larger man without the slightest sensation of fear. He, a member of the church, was even now hiding a fugitive from justice; he, a married man, had stood some moments in the presence of another man's wife who was in light evening attire, before he was conscious of the delicacy of the situation. He had sprung to the rescue because the intended victim—as he supposed—was a woman; yet that very same woman had called his incomparable family a "gang." As he reviewed the evening's experiences his mentality became clouded to such an extent that he crept into bed to seek refuge in sleep. As he softly stretched himself his wife sighed, half wakening:

"I thought I—heard a noise—a little while ago."

"Yes, dear; I tumbled down. It's all right now; go to sleep."

Amazement sat enthroned on the family visage in the morning when the disarranged countenance of the head of the family was exposed, but Zenas said it would all pass off during the day. All he needed, he said, was absolute quiet; and he absolutely ordered his wife to take all the children on a steamboat trip to New York and back, taking the earliest boat, and bringing him up a first-rate breakfast just before they started. His wife obeyed him, under protest, and no sooner were the family out of the gate than Zenas, in his pajamas, took the loaded tray, ascended to the top floor, and kicked softly at the door of his guest. As the door opened, Maytham looked more at the man than the breakfast, and exclaimed in contrite tones:

"Did I do all that?"

"Don't mention it," said the little fellow, with a reckless air. "I haven't had such a bully fight since I left school. Eat your breakfast before it gets cold, so I can bring your wife up to see you. The coast is clear; I've got the whole family out of the house—first time in my life I ever was glad to do it. Everything here?—water, towels, comb, and brush? She deserves to see you looking your best."

Then the little fellow dressed hastily, hid as much of his

face as possible in a bandage and slipped out upon his rear piazza. As he suspected, Mrs. Maytham was in her garden and saw him; he beckoned, in real country style, and she was beside him in a moment.

"Allow me, madam," said he with a bow which was dignified in spite of his aspect, "to conduct you to your husband." He led the way upstairs, and soon husband and wife were in each other's arms. The host discreetly withdrew, but stopped at the threshold and remarked:

"Don't feel the least bit uneasy; no one can disturb you. I've sent away my—" *gang*."

He was ashamed of the shot as soon as he had fired it, and still more ashamed when he discovered that it did not take effect. Then he remained on guard over both houses, entertaining officers and all other curious people, and forbidding that any one should even ring Mrs. Maytham's door-bell—the poor lady's nerves had been terribly shaken. Later in the day he watched carefully for the return of his family, and warned Mrs. Maytham in time.

"O Zenas!" exclaimed Mrs. Bortley, as her husband met her at the gate. "The greatest news! I bought an evening paper as we left New York, and—what do you think?—Mr. Maytham isn't a defaulter at all. The securities he is said to have taken have been found, and the real thieves have confessed, and——"

"Give me that paper," interrupted Zenas. He glanced over the story, and, as he read, his wife exclaimed:

"Now what do you think?"

"I think," said Zenas, "that our neighbor will call on us to-day." Then he dashed into the house, showed the newspaper to his hidden guest, hurried downstairs and over the fence, rang the bell, and broke the news as gently as possible to his wondering neighbor.

"You will excuse me, I trust, madam, if I present you to my wife when you come over? She is the head of the family when she is at home."

"I shall do myself the honor to tell Mrs. Bortley how loyal a neighbor, how brave a soul, and how noble a man her husband is," said Mrs. Maytham, "and I shall beg her to let me be her husband's devoted friend—and hers—forever."

So the Bortleys came to know their next-door neighbors after all.

THE MAD MARE OF EYLAU

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF THE BARON DE MARBOT

The baron relates a stirring incident of the battle of Austerlitz—fought under the eyes of Bonaparte himself—and tells how his life was saved by a terrible outburst of rage on the part of his wounded and maddened horse. Translated by Edward J. Wheelock for the Argonaut.

It was in the autumn of 1805, when the officers of the Grand Army were making their preparations and completing their equipages for the battle of Austerlitz. I already had two good horses, but I was searching for a third and better one—a stanch battle horse. The latter was extremely difficult to find, for, although horses were infinitely less dear than to-day, the prices were still very high, and I had little money. But hazard served me marvellously.

I encountered a German scientist, named M. d'Aister, whom I had known when he was a professor at Sorèze; he had become preceptor to the children of a rich Swiss banker, M. Scherer, who was established in Paris, and associated with M. Finguerlin. M. d'Aister apprised me that M. Finguerlin, then very opulent and maintaining a vast establishment, had an extensive stable, one of the leading animals in which was a beautiful mare named Lisette, an excellent beast from Mecklenburg, of attractive appearance, light as a deer-hound, and so well trained that a child could manage her. She had but one defect, a terrible one and which was fortunately displayed but rarely. She bit like a bulldog, and threw herself furiously on persons who displeased her. It was on this account that M. Finguerlin had determined to sell her.

I offered a thousand francs, and Lisette became mine, although she had cost M. Finguerlin five thousand. For many months this beast gave me considerable trouble; it required four or five men to saddle her, and the only manner in which her bridle could be put on was by covering her eyes and fastening all four of her legs together. But once one was upon her back, she was found to be an admirable mount. After she had belonged to me for some time, however, as she had already bitten a number of persons and had not even spared myself, I concluded to get rid of her. About this time I took into my service a man named Francois Woirland.

He was warned of Lisette's bad character, and, before approaching her, he provided himself with an exceedingly hot leg of mutton, and when the beast threw herself upon him, he thrust the meat at her, and she seized it between her teeth. It burned her gums, her palate, and her tongue, so that she immediately dropped it, and from this moment she was perfectly submissive to Woirland, whom she dared not attack. I employed the same means and obtained a similar result. She thus became easy of approach to myself and my domestic, and even became slightly more tractable for the grooms of the staff, whom she saw every day, but woe to strangers who passed too close to her!

Such was the mare upon which I was mounted at Eylau at the moment when the débris of the army corps of Marshal Augereau, crushed by a hail-storm of grape-shot and bullets, were endeavoring to reunite near the big cemetery. You will probably remember that the Fourteenth Regiment of the line occupied a solitary position upon a small hill, which they could not quit except by order from the emperor.

The snow having ceased to fall momentarily, we could perceive this intrepid regiment, surrounded by the enemy, waving its eagle in the air to show that it still held out, and asking for aid. The emperor, touched by the courage and devotion of these fine soldiers, resolved to make an attempt to save them, and ordered Marshal Augereau to send an officer to them. The latter was to tell them to quit the hill, form a small square, and work their way toward us, while a brigade of cavalry would march to meet them and second their efforts.

It was before the grand charge made by Murat; it was almost impossible to execute the emperor's will, because a cloud of Cossacks separated us from the Fourteenth of the line. It became evident that the officer who should be sent toward the unfortunate regiment would be killed or captured before reaching them. However, the emperor's order was positive, and the marshal was obliged to conform to it. It was the usage in the Imperial Army for the aides-de-camp to arrange themselves in order at fixed distances from their general, the one at the head attending to the order of the moment, then placing himself at the rear when his mission was fulfilled. Thus each carried the orders in turn, and the dangers were equally divided. A brave captain of engineers

named Froissard, who, although not an aide-de-camp, was attached to the marshal's staff, found himself at the head of the line, and was charged to carry the order to the Fourteenth. Froissard sped away at a gallop. We lost sight of him in the midst of the Cossacks, and we never saw him again nor learned what became of him. The marshal, seeing that the Fourteenth made no movement, sent an officer named David. He met the same fate as Froissard, and we heard no more of him. It is probable that the two men, having been killed and despoiled, were not recognized among the numerous corpses with which the field was covered. For the third time the marshal called for the officer on duty. It was my turn!

On seeing the son of his old friend approach, and, I dare add, his favorite aide-de-camp, the good marshal's figure shook and his eyes filled with tears, because he could not dissimulate the fact that he was sending me to an almost certain death. But the emperor's orders must be obeyed; I was a soldier, and they could not make one of my comrades go in my place, even if I would have suffered such a thing, which would have dishonored me. But, in making a sacrifice of my life, I considered it my duty to take all possible precautions to save it if possible.

I had remarked that the two officers who had gone before me had carried their sabres in their hands, which led me to believe that they had endeavored to defend themselves against the Cossacks. This was useless, according to my idea, because it compelled them to arrest their progress to combat against a multitude of enemies, who finished by overwhelming them. I accordingly conducted myself otherwise and, allowing my sabre to remain in the scabbard, I considered myself as a rider who, wishing to win a prize at a race, directs himself as rapidly as possible and by the shortest line toward the desired goal, without occupying himself with what is upon the right or left of his road. Now, my goal being the little hill occupied by the Fourteenth of the line, I resolved to proceed thither without paying any attention to the Cossacks.

This method succeeded perfectly. Lisette, lighter than a swallow and rather flying than running, seemed to devour space, leaping over mounds of corpses of men and horses, over broken gun-carriages and hardly extinct bivouac fires. Thousands of Cossacks were scattered over the plain.

The first who perceived me acted like hunters in a game-drive, who, seeing a hare rise before them, mutually announce his presence by their cries. But none of these Cossacks tried to stop me, in the first place on account of the extreme rapidity of my flight, and also probably because, being in such great numbers, each of them thought it would be impossible for me to evade his comrades farther on. So well did my plan work that I reached the Fourteenth without either myself or my excellent mare having received the least scratch.

I found the Fourteenth formed into a square upon the summit of the hill; but, as the slope of the ground was very slight, the enemy's cavalry had been able to execute several charges against the French regiment. These had all been repulsed, so that the brave little band was surrounded by a circle of corpses of horses and Russian dragoons, forming a species of rampart which thenceforth rendered the position nearly inaccessible to the cavalry. In spite of the aid of our foot-soldiers, I had considerable difficulty in passing this bloody and frightful intrenchment.

I was at last within the square. Since the death of Colonel Savary, killed at the passage of the Ukra, the Fourteenth had been commanded by a chief of battalion. When, in the midst of a storm of bullets, I transmitted to this officer the order to quit his position and endeavor to join the body of the army, he observed to me that the enemy's artillery, which had for over an hour been firing upon the Fourteenth, had caused such losses that the handful of soldiers remaining would be infallibly exterminated if they descended into the plain. Furthermore, he had not time to prepare for the execution of this movement, as a column of Russian infantry was marching upon him, and was then not more than a hundred yards away from us.

"I see no means of saving the regiment," said the chief of battalion. "Return to the emperor, give him the farewell of the Fourteenth of the line, which has faithfully executed his orders, and carry to him the eagle which he gave to us, and which we can no longer defend; it would be too painful for us, while dying, to see it fall into the enemy's hands."

The commander then handed over to me the eagle, which the soldiers—glorious remnant of this intrepid regiment—saluted for the last time with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!"—and this from those who were about to die for him! It

was the *Cæsar, morituri te salutant!* of Tacitus, but this cry was shouted by heroes.

The eagles of the infantry were very heavy, and their weight was augmented by a big, strong oaken handle, upon the summit of which they were fixed. The length of this handle embarrassed me considerably, and, as the staff deprived of its eagle could not constitute a trophy for the enemy, I resolved, with the commander's assent, to break it. But just as I was bending over in my saddle to exert force enough to separate the eagle from the handle, one of the numerous bullets, which the Russians were pouring at us, passed through the horn at the back of my hat, within an inch of my head.

The shock was rendered more terrible by the fact that my hat, being retained by a strong leather strap fixed under my chin, offered more resistance to the blow. I was as though stunned, but did not fall from my horse. Blood flowed from my nose, my ears, and even from my eyes; nevertheless, I still heard, I saw, I understood, and preserved all my intellectual faculties, although my members were so paralyzed that it was impossible for me to lift a single finger.

In the mean while, the column of Russian infantry, which we had seen approaching, reached the hill; they were grenadiers, whose immense hats, decorated with metal, had the appearance of bishops' mitres. These men, gorged with brandy and in infinitely superior numbers, threw themselves furiously upon the feeble remnant of the unfortunate Fourteenth, the soldiers of which had lived for many days upon potatoes and melted snow; upon that day they had not had time to prepare even this miserable repast. Nevertheless our brave soldiers defended themselves valiantly with their bayonets, and when the square had been pierced they grouped themselves into various clusters, and sustained for a long time this unequal combat.

During this frightful mêlée, many of our men, in order not to be struck down from behind, backed up against the flanks of my mare, who, contrary to her usual habits, remained quiet. If I had been able to move, I would have urged her forward, in order to withdraw from this field of carnage; but it was absolutely impossible for me to press my legs together so as to make the animal understand my wishes. My position was all the more frightful from the fact that, as I have said, I had retained the ability to see and to think.

Not only did they fight all around me, but a Russian officer, with an atrocious face, was making constant efforts to pierce me with his sword, and, as the crowd of combatants prevented him from reaching me, he designated me by gestures to the soldiers in his vicinity. These taking me for the chief of the French, because I alone was on horseback, fired at me above the heads of their comrades, and numerous balls constantly whistled past my ears. One of these would certainly have knocked out what little life there was left in me, if a terrible incident had not occurred to facilitate my removal from the bloody scene.

Among the French who had backed up against the left flank of my mare was a quartermaster whom I knew, having often seen him in the marshal's tent. This man, attacked and wounded by several grenadiers, fell under Lisette, and seized one of my legs in an attempt to raise himself, when a Russian soldier, whose steps were rendered decidedly uncertain by drunkenness, tried to pierce his breast. The grenadier lost his equilibrium, and the point of his bayonet, badly directed, ran through my cloak, which was flying in the wind. Seeing that I did not fall, the Russian turned his attention from the quartermaster to me. He plied me with a shower of blows, harmless at first, but finally one reached my arm, and, with a grim sort of pleasure, I felt the warm blood flow.

The grenadier, redoubling his fury, aimed still another blow at me, when, the force which he put forth causing him to slip, his bayonet sunk into my mare's thigh. Recalled to her ferocious instincts by the pain, Lisette precipitated herself upon the Russian, and, at a single mouthful, tore away with her teeth the entire skin of his face, making a red, living death's head.

It was a horrible sight! Then, throwing herself furiously into the midst of the combatants, Lisette, kicking and biting, overturned everything that opposed her passage. The Russian officer who had so often tried to strike me made an effort to grasp the mare's bridle. Lisette seized him by the stomach, lifted him up with ease, and carried him out of the struggle to the base of the little hill, where she trampled his body under her feet, and left him dying upon the snow. Then, taking the road by which she had come, she directed her way toward the cemetery of Eylau at a rapid gallop. Thanks to the hussar's saddle in which I was seated, I had thus far kept

my place upon the mare's back, but a new danger awaited me. The snow had begun to fall again, and the big flakes obscured the air. I had gone nearly to Eylau when I found myself in front of a battalion of the old Imperial Guard, who, not being able to distinguish objects at any distance, mistook me for a Russian officer leading a cavalry charge. Immediately the entire battalion fired upon me. My cloak and my saddle were riddled with balls; but I was not wounded, nor was my mare, who continued her rapid course, traversing the three ranks of the battalion with the same ease that a snake passes through a hedge. But this last flight had exhausted Lisette's forces. She had lost a quantity of blood, one of the large veins of her thigh having been cut, and, all at once, the poor beast sank down and rolled to one side, I rolling to the other.

Stretched out upon the snow among the mass of dead and dying, unable to move in any way, I insensibly and painlessly lost consciousness. It seemed as though some one were rocking me softly in a cradle. Finally I swooned completely, and was not even reanimated by the eighty squadrons of Murat, going to the charge, passing near me, and perhaps over me. I estimate that my fainting fit lasted about four hours, and when I regained my senses this is the horrible position in which I found myself: I was completely naked, retaining nothing but my hat and my right boot.

Believing me dead, one of the soldiers had despoiled me, according to custom, and while endeavoring to draw off my right boot, had pulled me by one leg, at the same time pressing upon my stomach with his foot. The strong tugs which this man gave me had undoubtedly reanimated me. I rose up partially and coughed up clots of blood which obstructed my throat. The violent shock produced by the passage of the bullet through my hat had occasioned such a stagnation of blood that portions of my body, my shoulders, and my breast were black, while I was also smeared with blood which had flowed from my wounded arm. My hat and my hair were full of blood-stained snow; my haggard eyes rolled in a horrible manner. The soldier turned away and departed with my effects, without my being able to address a single word to him, so great was my prostration. But I had regained my mental faculties, and my thoughts were turned toward God and toward my mother.

The sinking sun threw a few feeble rays between the clouds, and in saying a farewell to him I firmly believed it would be my last.

"If, at least, they had not despoiled me," I said to myself, "some one of the many persons passing by me, remarking the gold braid upon my pelisse, and recognizing that I was the aide-de-camp of a marshal, would have had me transported to an ambulance. But, seeing me naked, they will confound me with the numerous corpses by which I am surrounded; very soon, truly, there will be no difference between them and me. I cannot call assistance, and the approaching night takes away all hope of being succored. The cold increases; can I support it until to-morrow, when already I feel my limbs stiffening?"

I awaited death then. If a miracle had saved me in the midst of the frightful struggle between the Russians and the Fourteenth, could I hope that another miracle would draw me from the horrible position in which I found myself? This second miracle happened, however, and I will relate how.

Marshal Augereau had a *valet de chambre* named Pierre Dannel, a very intelligent and very devoted boy, but a little too much inclined to argument. Now, it happened, during our stay at Houssaye, that Dannel, having responded impertinently to his master, was discharged. Desolate, the boy begged me to intercede for him, which I did with so much zeal that I was the cause of his being received back into grace by the marshal. From that moment the *valet de chambre* vowed a deep attachment for me.

This man, having left all the equipages at Landsberg, had parted from his commander on the day of the battle to carry supplies to his master. He placed the articles which the marshal required in a light wagon which could pass everywhere. This little wagon was driven by a man who had served in the same company to which belonged the soldier who despoiled me of my effects. The latter, carrying my clothing, passed near the wagon, which was stationed upon one side of the cemetery, when, having recognized in the driver his old comrade, he accosted him in order to show him the brilliant booty which he had obtained from a dead body.

Now, it is necessary for you to know that during our sojourn in the cantonments of the Vistula, the marshal having sent Dannel to seek for provisions at Warsaw, I had charged him

to remove from my pelisse the black astrachan fur with which it was ornamented, in order to replace it by gray astrachan, newly adopted by the aides-de-camp of Prince Berthier, who set the fashion in the army. As yet, I was the only officer under Marshal Augereau who wore the gray astrachan. Dannel, being present at the display of booty made by the soldiers, easily recognized my pelisse, and this, inducing him to regard the other effects of the pretended dead man more closely, he found among them my watch, marked with the initials of my father, to whom it had belonged. The *valet de chambre*, never doubting that I had been killed, and loudly lamenting my loss, wished, nevertheless, to see me for the last time. Upon being conducted by the soldier to the spot where I lay, he found me living!

The joy of this good fellow, to whom I certainly owed my life, was extreme. He hastened to summon my servant, to procure some clothing, and to have me transported to a barn near by, where he rubbed my body with rum while awaiting the doctor. When the latter arrived, he dressed the wound in my arm, and declared that the effusion of blood which it had caused had saved my life.

THE IRON SHROUD

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD

Famous Story Series

Of all the short stories written within the last fifty years, few make a deeper and more ineffaceable impression on the reader's mind than *The Iron Shroud*. With unswerving directness of purpose, in keeping with the hidden machinery of the dungeon, the story moves relentlessly onward to the appalling catastrophe. From *Blackwood's Magazine*.

The castle of the prince of Tolfi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the middle ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued—the dark, fierce, and un pitying revenge of an Italian heart.

Vivenzio—the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace—the young, the brave, the proud Vivenzio, fell beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Tolfi, and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof and floor and sides were of iron, solidly wrought, and spaciouly constructed. High above there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding-doors beneath them which occupied the centre, no chink or chasm or projection broke the smooth black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner; and beside it, a vessel with water, and a coarse dish filled with coarser food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivenzio shrunk with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his questioning of their intentions were alike vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue!

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps! And,

as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him, that never more the face or voice or tread of man would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beautiful world he loved and whose minion he had been! Here he was to end his life—a life he had just begun to revel in! And by what means? By secret poison or by murderous assault? No—for then it had been needless to bring him hither. Famine perhaps—a thousand deaths in one! It was terrible to think of it; but it was yet more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity, in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power of rending asunder, with his bare hands, the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Tolfi, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice either the slow death of famine, or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivenzio entered his dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighboring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sank within him, and he threw himself dejectedly down upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams wafted his delighted spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Tolfi's prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight; but how long he had

slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be sultry noon, for he could measure time by no other note of its progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that, in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed round with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished; and recoiling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy; but the other was positive. His pitcher of water, and the dish which contained his food, had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he even inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over-night, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor color as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited, therefore, during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so, he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which he was convinced there existed none. It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his notice was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison. He felt confident that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances. It was much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken than that a portion of the solid iron, which formed the walls, could have escaped from its position, and he dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivenzio partook of the food that was before him, without apprehension. It might be poisoned; but if it were, he knew he could not escape death, should such be the design of Tolfi, and the quickest death would be the speediest release.

The day passed wearily and gloomily; though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared, or preparing, for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow if once more at liberty and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if nor bribe, nor prayers, nor force prevailed, was a friendly blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate but it looked lovely in Vivenzio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivenzio watched. Morning came, and Vivenzio was confounded! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose he had been baffled: for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal! Nor was this all. Casting his looks toward the windows of his dungeon, he counted but FIVE! *Here* was no deception; and he was now convinced there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why

it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance convinced him they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter. He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art that no mark of division was perceptible. Again and again he surveyed them—and the floor—and the roof—and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them: he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance—that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivenzio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till daylight, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearances that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge (by the time that afterward elapsed before the morning came in) about two o'clock, there was a slight tremulous motion of the floors. He stooped. The motion lasted nearly a minute; but it was so extremely gentle, that he almost doubted whether it was real or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard. Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him; and dashing toward the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and as Vivenzio stretched out his hands, he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time; but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he watched with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking, with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivenzio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, toward them. There were FOUR! He could see only four: but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiselessly! For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but, both to sight and touch, it appeared one even and uniform surface, while, to repeated and violent blows, there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollowness.

This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing his eyes toward them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearances. The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying, at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding-door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of these four, as it had at first stood in the centre of the seven. But he could no longer doubt, what, on the preceding day, he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon *was* smaller. The roof had lowered—and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account for these things. Some frightful purpose—some devilish torture of mind or body—some unheard-of device for producing exquisite misery, lurked he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended, than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. "Yes!" he exclaimed, looking wildly round his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke—"Yes! it must be so! I see it!—I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God!—support me! it must be so! Yes, yes, *that* is to be my fate! Yon roof will descend!—these walls will hem me round—and slowly, slowly crush me in their iron arms! Lord God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! O fiend—O devil—is this your revenge?"

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony—tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face—he sobbed aloud—he tore his hair—he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Tolfi, and the next moment passionate prayers to Heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he rose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken no food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for six-and-thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his emotions. He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water; and, reeling like a drunken man in his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could, their approach; and when, at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams haunted him—ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination—he shouted and screamed, as if he already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him—he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing between its iron walls. Then would he spring up—stare wildly about him—stretch forth his hands, to be sure he

yet had space enough to live—and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivenzio. But it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features, as he cast his eyes upward, and gazed upon the THREE windows that now alone remained! The three!—there were no more!—and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter. The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivenzio could put no cheat upon his reason, as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived, that walls and roof and windows should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise, and without motion almost, fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch, who might be immured there, with anticipation, merely, of a fate, from which, in the very crisis of his agony, he was to be reprieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torments—to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish!—alone he was to wait a slow coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude and that tardy coming!

“It is not death I fear,” he exclaimed, “but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that—all horrible and revolting as it is—if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it comes? How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to bid the hideous spectre

hence—none to make it familiar to my thoughts, or myself patient of its errand. My thoughts, rather, will flee from me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh! for a deep sleep to fall upon me! That so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me than my fainting spirit has already tasted!"

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivenzio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance; and there is no hope so feeble as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had before observed; and should he again feel the gentle tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant when his food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate *was* to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came; and as the hour approached when Vivenzio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position when—yes—he was certain of it—the floor moved under him! He sprang up, and, in a voice nearly suffocated with emotion, called aloud. He paused—the motion ceased—he felt no stream of air—all was hushed—no voice answered to his—he burst into tears, and as he sank to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed: "O my God! my God! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit."

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows!—and *two* days—and all would be over! Fresh food—fresh

water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near, that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivenzio shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrowed area. But his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wailings. With folded arms, and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard quick breathing, and a hurried walk, he strode backward and forward in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, or what pen describe the dark and terrible character of his thoughts? Like the fate that moulded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed. Words are inscribed there! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushes toward them; but his blood freezes as he reads:

"I, Ludovico Sforza, tempted by the gold of the prince of Tolfi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Tolfi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed *me* to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will me, that ministered to his unhallowed purpose. Miserable wretch, whoe'er thou art, that readest these lines, fall on thy knees, and invoke, as I have done, His sustaining mercy who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Tolfi—armed with this tremendous engine, which, in a few hours, must crush *you*, as it will the needy wretch who made it."

A deep groan burst from Vivenzio. He stood, like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded in his ears, "Prepare!" Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling. His brain already feels the descending horror—his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he

does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls, and his warring spirit demands, "Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?" An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, "Why should I? He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace; and I should be less than man not to be able to do as much!"

The evening sun was descending, and Vivenzio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link, that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought. As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound he was beneath them—with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but, at the extremity of a long vista, cut through the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive groves, shady walks, and, in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight. How exquisite was the cool breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance! He inhaled it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the rippling of the calm green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth. How he gazed, and panted, and still clung to his hold! sometimes hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loath to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned for a considerable time by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendor of nature! Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids, at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive-tree, or the gentle swell of undulating waves. Oh, that he were a mariner exposed

upon those waves to the worst fury of storm and tempest; or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered!

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time, in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him, during the whole night, like one who had been drugged with opium. He was equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying; at intervals, sleeping heavily; and when not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those he loved, with a confused mingling of all.

In this pitiable condition, the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivenzio, if dawn it might be called—the dim, obscure light which faintly struggled through the ONE SOLITARY window of his dungeon. He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did notice it; for as he raised his eyes and saw the portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance. But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change his iron bed had undergone. It was a bed no longer. It stood before him, the visible semblance of a funeral couch or bier! When he beheld this, he started from the ground; and, in raising himself, suddenly struck his head against the roof, which was now so low that he could no longer stand upright. “God’s will be done!” was all he said, as he crouched his body, and placed his hand upon the bier; for such it was. The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforza, that, as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously contrived machinery, that effected the transformation. The object was, of course, to heighten, in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish which the preceding ones had aroused. For the same reason,

the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivenzio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush from him. The air seemed thick, and he breathed with difficulty; or it might be that he fancied it was so, from the narrow limits of his dungeon, which were now so diminished that he could neither stand up nor lie down at his full length. But his wasted spirits and oppressed mind no longer struggled within him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if thus revenge had struck its final blow; for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang. But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Tolfi; and the artificer of his designs had imagined a counteracting device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivenzio! He started. It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder. This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls, as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivenzio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless. Vivenzio looked up, and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat cowering beneath it; and he felt that a farther contraction of but a few inches only must commence the frightful operation. Roused as he had been, he now gasped for breath. His body shook violently—he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front. Thus he remained for an hour, when that deafening bell beat again, and again there came the crash of horrid death. But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivenzio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent—crash succeeded crash—and on, and on, and on came the mysterious engine of death, till Vivenzio's smothered groans were heard no more! He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides—and the flattened bier was his *Iron Shroud*.

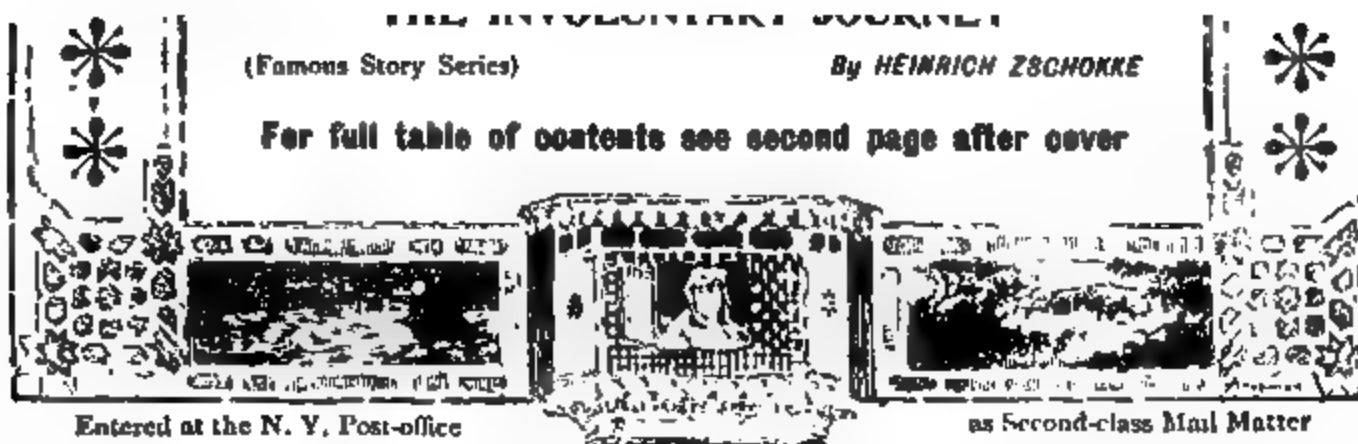
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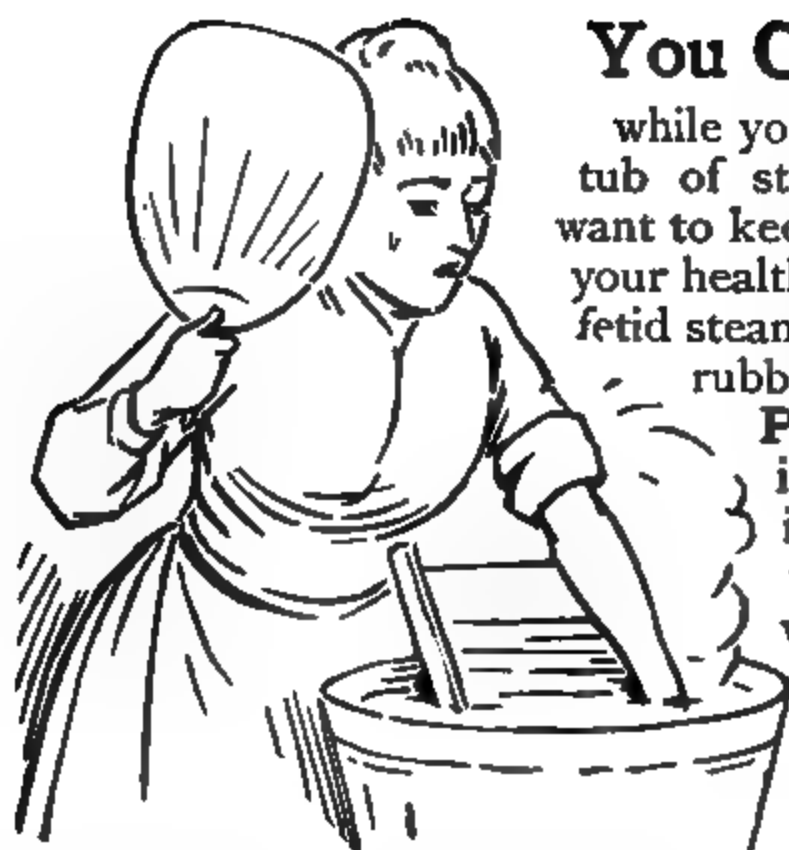


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ANNOUNCEMENT.

A story by Ethel Knight Mollison, of Saint John, N. B., has been selected as the winner of prize competition No. 3, for the best pen-picture of everyday life. It will be printed in the August number of Short Stories. For other announcements and for interesting information regarding combination subscription offers, see front advertising pages.

MARIPOSA

BY M. S. PADEN

The prize story in the Western Dialect competition is noteworthy for its fine dramatic interest, as well as for the author's successful use of a quaint and picturesque phraseology.

You childern know them purty things—Mariposy lilies? Genewine Colorado posies, prospectin' round these yer mount'ns most anywhars, settin' under sour-lookin' pines a-list'nin' to the roarin' of the wind—contented-like as yer purty little faces a-swollerin' ole Pete's talk.

Waal, I'm a-gointer put up a yarn about one uv them this time. You nee'nter laff. Think Unkl' Pete savvies nawthin' only 'bout Injins, scalps, gol'-diggin's, 'n' snow-shoots? Hain't much on posies gin'rally.

Naw, 'tain't no fairies.

Yessiree! Thar's a gun in't; ef 'twa'n't, wouldn't be no story, I s'ppose. Durn little coyotes, nawthin' but killin' an' karkisses suits you. 'Tain't Injins; though some can't see much differ twixt them an' Greasers—what you calls Mexicans. Some uv them is consider'ble mixed; the "per-r-oud Castile blood" they blows about ain't on the surface. Castile soap 'ud be more to the p'int.

But Mariposy wuz purty as this posy, in her Mexican way—eyes like midnight in a gulch, hair black as its wavin' pines, a voice like wind in their tops.

Waal, one day I wuz sightin' to'rd Del Norte to dicker 'bout an *alfalfa* deal. Nigh to ther town, I see somethin' loomin' up; sez I:

"Some feller's takin' cattle to range."

Then I reco'nized Tom. Han'some young feller wuz Tom in flannel shirt and "chaps," the wind layin' his broad-brim "pra'rie-king" back, and showin' his face ez he loped past. Nigh the Ryo Grandy bridge, my broncho most shed me ez Tom cum thunderin' back.

"By gum! Thet's ridin'," I sez, admirin' his slim figger, most one with his beast, ez they shot past to'rd town. He was nigh out uv sight afore his prime opposyte cum pantin' an' cussin' after him; old Diaz a-clawin' the a'r, makin' it blue with un-Sunday-school talk—a-diggin' his knees into his winded nag's sides, goin' lickety-bump, a-workin' ten miles perpendiklar to ary mile ahead.

I laffed, then shuk my head. Resky foolin' with Diaz, thinks I; it's bad blood. They've scrapped ag'in, and Tom's a-drivin' Diaz' cattle onter ther range, an' Diaz hez got onter him. He's tryin' ter run Tom down, like's not; but I c'u'dn't swar ter Tom. (I c'u'dn't, ef I ha'nter met him goin' t'other way.) I wanter be outer this ef ole Diaz goes ter lawin'.

"Trial by jury!" sez I; "trial by gun's my ticket. Them fam'lies 'ud of settled thar 'scrap' ages sence, ef lawyers hed'n't got the cinch on 'em."

T'other side uv town, Diaz wuz found dead, a bullet-hole in his head, sized bore of a leetle gun of Tom's. What with fam'ly "scraps," Diaz bein' seen a-chasing after Tom, an' Tom's comin' in on his broncho from thet side uv town—with nawthin' t' say 'ceptin' he'd druv Diaz' cattle onter range fer mischeef; Diaz chased him an' he out-rid him, but Diaz follered, yit he'd take his oath he hedn't shot Diaz—all that went ag'in' him. The story didn't assay well. Court wuz pledged ter "extarminate the Western rough," the papers said. A Greaser hed hung fer killin' a Ute, an' the feelin' wuz fer no parshality.

I tuk int'rest in thet trial, both fer Tom's sake—I knowed him sence he wa'n't no bigger'n a ca'tridge—and becuz I knowed 'nuff t' witness ef they'd knowed it; 'twa'n't much, but leave a lawyer to build Pike's Peak outer ther foothills.

You see I'm gittin' to my story from all p'int's t'wonct,

like Injins useter cum at our stockades; but I'll git thar es morally sartin es they did frequint.

Things looked rocky fer Tom, thar ain't a doubt of it.

I c'u'dn't stan' it. W'y, I teached him ter shoot jacks wen he warn't no higher 'n sagebrush. I c'u'dn't breathe tel I wuz out, gallopin' roun' the shoulder uv Lookout Mountain, over the mesa.

Don'no' wut tuk me thet road. Don' believe in sperits, but I cum mighty nigh takin' stock in thar lead thet game. I cum down hill, acrost ther bridge, an' onter the ole Plazy 'fore I knowed.

Somethin' quar 'bout thet row uv flat-roofed white 'dobs, winders an' doors slantin' ez Greaser idees; them big round ovens like onpossible musharooms; the p'inted church-front with bell-hole atop, an' cross settin' on a heap at ther back. Mexican squatters hed been ordered to vamoose, 'n' thar ole traps uv houses wuz fallin' lonesum-like ter pieces.

'Twuz late afternoon; I thought shadders were a-foolin' me when I see somethin' flutter roun' a 'dobe corner. With a passin' idee uv sperits, likewise of Greasers' sneakin' ways, I dashed up an' covered somethin' in the 'dobe.

"Hands up!"

"*Si si*," she sobbed—"Mariposy."

I felt like a durn fool settin' thar holdin' up a gal.

"Air ye alone, Mariposy? Wut ye doin' h'yar?"

She piled a hundred questions at me in her Greaser-American, windin' up:

"Ees it a' right—you air Tome's frent?"

Thinkin' on'y 'bout Tom, an' nawthin' 't all 'bout ther gal, I shuk it all out. "He'll hang, sure!" sez I.

You'd orter seen her!

"He not kill Diaz!" she stomped.

I jumped.

"I see't done," sez Mariposa, 'most cryin'. "I know! Take me—I tell—I save Tom. Ah, the rope!" she laid her purty hand on her throat. "To die!—to see sun an' flowers an' hear birds—to kiss—no more! The cold, dark ground—the worms!" I c'u'd feel her shiver ag'in' me ez I spurred back to town best we c'u'd, a-carryin' double.

I seen she knowed somethin', an' I wuz wild at the idee uv savin' Tom. She didn't tell me much—she'd been with an aunt up Saguache, and knowed nawthin' uv the trial. Her

folks sent her nary word or kep' her off purpus'—they're thet shy uv law. Mariposy slid off fin'ly from them an' camped, pore critter, in thet lonely place. She wanted word from Tom to cum back; sent Tony Montez to tell him, but hed nary answer. So, by that, I seen Tom likewise knowed some-thin' too. Wut did the feller mean? Wuz thar someun he wouldn't give away?

I swar I'm plum glad I never guessed nigh the truth or I'd ben on the horns of a dylummer or—whichsomever the poet sez 'bout it—stid uv ridnin' right straight ter court with her.

Ther sheriff ha' ter set on Tom ter hold him wen he first see Mariposy come in.

"*Señor*," sez she, out uv breath, "I did it, not Tome. Here's the peestol. He giv' it me long time. I can proof. That day, he think Diaz not after him any more. Tom joost ride away from me, an' Diaz cum behint—I see heem draw hees gun. Tome not see. I shoot quick—then Tome see."

It wuz all writ down by the man as makes marks on paper like a nest of rattlers let loose. The jedge stopped chewin' gum; Tom's lawyer unj'inted hissself, an' the prosecutor's forrid bulged bigger ez he thought an' thought.

"Fer me," Mariposy wound up, "the rope"—I c'u'd feel her shiver agi'n—"the stillness, the cold, wet earth—the worms—but not fer Tome."

By thet time I wuz a-lookin' at the patch uv sky twixt the winder-shade an' the foothills. I kin see its deep purple yit.

It wuz dark a'most inside.

"Tome!" Her voice rings in my ole ears yit. She didn't need ter say nawthin' but his name—thet wuz a hull story.

"But not the rope!" she whispered. Thar wuz a quick streak through the dusk like a flash uv giant-powder; Tom an' the sheriff jumped together ter ketch her. Tom kissed her afore the breath left her.

Thet Mariposy's summer wuz nigh twenty year ago, children. Run along; story 'bout Injins next time.

Wonder ef I'd orter tole them kids Tom wuz thar pap. No'p. They mighter thought their maw wuz a squatter on another woman's claim—an' she's a good sort too.

W'u'dn't wonder if Tom's clean furgot thet leetle gal! Waal, waal, ef she hedn't drawed her gun mighty quick an' shot ole Diaz, Tom w'u'd uv been the dead man 'stead uv poor leetle Mariposy.

SING-LEE: A CHINESE LOVE STORY

BY ADELAIDE PERCY

To the uncultivated ear of the Western barbarian, Chinese music is still in a sufficiently chaotic state. We can only shudder at the thought of what it must have been before the remarkable discovery made by the hero of this charming tale. Written for Short Stories.

Ages ago, when young men in China did their own courting, Hoang-Ty ruled as emperor.

One summer day the ruler lay down on his silken couch to have his usual after-dinner nap, but was so disturbed by the discordant music of some strolling musicians that he could not rest.

Sending for Lyng-Lun, the court musician, he reproved him, saying, "Lyng-Lun, is that the music you allow the emperor of China to hear?"

"Most gracious majesty," Lyng-Lun replied in vindication of himself, "we can never have perfect harmony in our music until we have a melodic arrangement of the different tones."

Hoang-Ty's face lowered as he said angrily, "Why has not this been done?" and, before Lyng-Lun had recovered from the astonishment occasioned by this question, Hoang-Ty continued: "Lyng-Lun, listen to the commands of China: Music must be arranged and regulated by you, on similar principles to those on which I have established the laws of the land. If in one year from to-day you have done this, you may ask any boon you wish from the state; if, on the other hand, you have not accomplished the task, you lose your rank and your head at the same time."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, most gracious ruler," said Lyng-Lun, as he prostrated himself and left the palace feeling that he had only another year to live.

How could he satisfy the emperor? He had no fundamental principles as a starting-point. True, he was court musician, but he could only make music by following the dictates of his ear.

For several days Lyng-Lun was not seen in his usual place at court; and, as he was a general favorite with both gentlemen and ladies, and moreover the handsomest man in China, it is no wonder that many conflicting rumors were spread abroad concerning him.

But soon the tongue of gossip was silenced, as he was seen making preparations for a journey, by some friends, who soon learned of the task imposed upon him, and condoled with him on his prospective fate, since they thought Hoang-Ty's undertaking an impossible thing to achieve.

"Who ever heard of order or law in music?" said they. "Why, music was the gift of the Joss. Why should human beings try to become as great as the gods?" they asked themselves.

However, the day came when Lyng-Lun took his departure. He must seek in other countries for this fundamental law of music, since it was not to be found in his own.

He travelled through many countries and had many adventures, and hair-breadth escapes from robbers and wild animals; but, no matter where he sought the elusive knowledge, all was in vain.

About six months had passed when, in his wanderings, Lyng-Lun came to the Si-Jang country; thence he travelled on until he reached the Hoang-Ho, the river of bamboos. Lyng-Lun proceeded along the bank until he came to an inviting spot just at sundown, and, being weary, determined to rest there for the night.

After a slight supper of rice, he lay down to sleep, but had not slumbered long when he was awakened by strains of sweetest music. He sat up and rubbed his eyes. Never had he heard such wonderful melody. He looked about him to see from whence it came, and soon found it proceeded from the river that flowed at his feet.

The strains, which had been low and sweet at first, now increased in volume until they became as loud as rolling thunder, yet were still harmonious and entrancing to the ear.

Suddenly the music ceased, and all was silent for a moment, when a sweet voice began singing.

Lyng-Lun now rose and, parting the bamboos that lined the banks of the river, perceived a ravishingly beautiful young woman sitting on a rock.

He listened for a long time, entranced, unable to utter a word or move.

The moon had made her nightly passage through the sky and was fast approaching the western horizon, though every object was still clearly discernible. In the silvery light, Lyng-

Lun saw the maiden lift her white arms, which were fastened together by a chain of gold, toward the sky, as if in supplication to the moon, and her song became more plaintive as she sang:

“ Handsome, gay, and loving is he.
When will he come to set me free?
Oh ! when, to set me free.”

The last line was sung so plaintively that tears flowed from Lyng-Lun's eyes as the rain from heaven.

He had just recovered his presence of mind and was about to address her, when, as the moon rolled down the opposite side of the hill, the maiden dived into the river and was seen no more that night.

Lyng-Lun, after gazing for some time at the dark waters where she had disappeared, said wonderingly to himself: “Where have I heard that sweet voice before? where have I met her fair face?”

Finding he could not answer these questions, he lay down again to sleep, and dreamed he saw the fair, nymph-like maiden walking toward him on the surface of the river. Then suddenly she began to sink, and called upon him to save her, when he awoke, to find the sun shedding its burning rays on his face.

After breaking his fast and bathing in the crystal water, Lyng-Lun sat down again to think.

Taking his knife from his pocket, he cut a bamboo and, trimming it off between the knots, began picking out the pith. All this was done in sheer idleness. If any one had asked him what he was making, he could not to save his life have told.

Then, to clear the hole thus made, he blew through it, and was surprised to hear a beautiful clear tone issue from the reed. He blew again, and the river murmured an answering tone in unison with that which came from the bamboo. Immediately two beautiful birds of blue plumage with golden breasts perched on a tall bamboo which rose above the others, and began singing.

Commencing with the same note produced by Lyng-Lun from the bamboo, and that of the murmuring waters, the birds gradually ascended the scale until it was completed.

“Here,” thought Lyng-Lun, “is what I have been seeking for six months. Here is a scale at once intelligible, in-

imitable, and easily revealed to man." Nature had furnished the fundamental law of music. Lyng-Lun had now only to cut seven bamboos and tune them to the notes the birds had sung.

It was nightfall when this was accomplished; but he could breathe freely once more, since now he had no longer to fear death at the hands of his emperor.

His task ended, Lyng-Lun's thoughts once more reverted to the charming maiden who had so quickly captivated his heart and whom he longed to see once more.

Peering through the bamboos and seeing she was not on the rock, where she had been the evening before, he scanned the river-bank to right and left. No signs of life were visible, and he was about in despair to give up all hopes of ever beholding the water-nymph again, when he heard the waters at his feet murmur the same music that had ravished his senses the night before. Was she approaching, and did the waters transmit her song? Louder and louder grew the strains; and then, as they suddenly ceased, he heard again the maiden singing on the rock.

This time he was not so much astonished and dumfounded by her beauty and voice. He had tasted of the sweetness of her song, and was now able to think clearly and act with promptness and decision.

There was no mode of reaching her save by swimming, and, the distance not being very great to the rock, he boldly plunged into the water and swam toward the nymph.

The maiden evidently was not aware of his presence; at least she made no sign other than by singing most joyously:

"He is coming to set me free;
Valiant and noble, I know thee,
My lover, oh! 'tis he!"

She finished as he reached the rock, and, perceiving him, sprang into his arms, saying: "Oh, I knew you were coming. I knew you were near. O my love! I have waited so long!" and she buried her face on his shoulder.

As Lyng-Lun felt her soft, white arms around him, and her heaving bosom next his beating heart, and saw the warm blushes as she kissed him—causing his own face to flame—love coursed through his frame and he was at once madly, blindly in love with the fair maiden.

Now he knew, without doubt, where he had seen and heard her before; it was in his heart—she was his ideal love.

"Yes, my love," he murmured, "I have come for thee."

One more embrace followed, but it was suddenly terminated by Sing-Lee—for that was the maiden's name—drawing from him and saying: "Did you bring the magical birds with you? Only the notes sung by them can break these chains; and then, oh, then I am free! Free to go with you!"

"The magical birds?" asked Lyng-Lun, in surprise; then, understanding that she was under an enchantment, he moaned, "Oh, if I had only known!"

"You must catch them; only their song can set me free," said Sing-Lee, as she began weeping.

Lyng-Lun stood in deep thought for some moments, then, drawing the seven bamboos from his sleeve, one after the other, he blew the notes of the scale.

The sky became overcast with dark clouds, as if the witch who had so wronged Sing-Lee knew the maiden was about to be set free; and the moon seemed to dance with delight at the prospect.

The last note sounded and Sing-Lee stood before Lyng-Lun more beautiful than ever, while the golden chains had fallen at her feet.

The magical scale had proved efficient.

At this moment a large swan glided to them and said: "Sing-Lee, my daughter, you must mount my back with your lover, and I will swim with you to the bank." That reached, she said, as she dived out of sight, "Fly now, the witch's power is great."

They soon left the river many miles behind them, and then Sing-Lee told Lyng-Lun the story of her captivity.

Her father was a prince, who lived many leagues to the north, at the sources of the Hoang-Ho. Near them also dwelt a water-witch and her son, Tsing-Ho, their nearest neighbors.

Now, Tsing-Ho had fallen desperately in love with Sing-Lee, and, when her mother refused his offer of marriage, she was turned into a swan and doomed to live as such the remainder of her life.

Still Tsing-Ho was no nearer the accomplishment of his object, for Sing-Lee's father was well versed in omens and charms, and was thus able to protect his child from Tsing-Ho's wicked enchantments.

These charms her father used successfully as a safeguard for a long time; but one day, while not thinking of the danger, Sing-Lee wandered some distance from the castle. She was walking along, humming her favorite song and gathering wild-flowers for her father, when, upon looking up, she found Tsing-Ho standing in front of her.

Before she could scream or run away, he had her in his power. Sing-Lee firmly refused to marry him; and, as her father had so charmed her life that Tsing-Ho could not change her from a human being, he put chains on her hands and taking her many miles away from her home, placed her on the rock—where Lyng-Lun had found her—and then set her free. During the daytime she was compelled to live under the water in a palace of Tsing-Ho's; but he could not harm her in any way, further than by keeping her captive.

The lovers had now proceeded on their way for four days when they discovered an army in pursuit of them.

"Surely, Tsing-Ho is after me again!" cried Sing-Lee, frightened at the thought of further captivity; and they set off at a quicker pace. But the army soon overtook them, when, oh, joy! she recognized the banners of her father's army and soon saw him at its head.

The handsome Lyng-Lun was a hero and not to be despised as a son-in-law, so the father accompanied them to the court of Hoang-Ty to intercede for them.

Here Lyng-Lun produced the bamboo and demonstrated the beauty and truth of his musical scale.

The emperor, Hoang-Ty, was so much pleased with him for this achievement that he raised him at once to the highest rank in his gift; and, after hearing of his adventures, said, "Now, Lyng-Lun, what do you request as further compensation for the perils and discomforts endured in your search?"

"If it please your majesty, I would ask permission to marry Sing-Lee, a foreign princess," answered Lyng-Lun, prostrating himself many times.

Now, such a marriage was against the laws of China; but then an emperor can break the laws he has himself made, and, in a case where both the young people were so devotedly in love, and the story of their meeting was so romantic, an exception must be made—therefore Hoang-Ty, smiling graciously on the handsome couple, gave his consent.

A TIMID WOMAN

BY OCTAVE THANET

The dread of losing the savings of many toilsome years inspires an overwrought little woman to put aside her natural timidity, and undertake a hazardous venture for the recovery of her property from the clutches of a plausible swindler, to whom her trusting husband has confided it. Copyright by the Authors' Alliance.

Never had there been a September like that in all the autumns of Judith Crest's life. The last day she went out to a little knoll edged by sycamore-trees, only to gaze about the farm for the sheer joy of possession. Yet she was not used to love the farm; born a timid and gregarious soul, she was oppressed by solitude. For twenty-two years that long hedge of poplars had looked to her as she fancied a prison stockade might look to a convict. Her eyes wearied of the billowy levels, tossing like an ocean about the trig, four-roomed house and huge unpainted barns; they wearied of the dusty currant-bushes and the unfruitful orchard. Most of all, they wearied of the one everlasting, relentless face of nature.

Therefore she spent hours, daily, nursing a pitiful little show of flowers such as had grown in the moist seashore gardens of her youth, and wilted under the fierce Iowa summers. Indoors, she cut out pictures from the illustrated journals that, at rare intervals, came into her hands, and pasted them on her unplastered walls. She learned to make paper flowers. She hankered after the dazzling, but unattainable, loveliness of wax flowers in oval glass cases. She subscribed to a semi-weekly household magazine named *The Homestead*; reading and rereading (in her hunger for companionship) the "Correspondence Column," wherein subscribers exchanged impartially their domestic trials, their spiritual wrestlings, the puzzles of rural etiquette, and the best fashions of washing blankets or raising a "sponge."

Occasionally, in that oft-studied column, would appear a paragraph like this: "I would like to ask the sister from Marr if she makes her chocolate frosting with the whites of eggs or boils it; and please send a recipe for preventing rabbits gnawing the rose-bushes." Signed "Lucetta." Or; "I dearly love to get the *Homestead*. I enjoy all the sisters say. Erminie writes *most beautifully!* Please write again,

Erminie, and let us know how to bear our crosses in the right spirit. I would be obliged, also, for a remedy how to prevent hair falling out."

When she read these, Mrs. Crest would blush with pleasure and feel the intoxicating delights of fame, for *she* was Lucetta.

But for most of the time there was only work to break the loneliness. To be sure, there was plenty of work, and had been all through the twenty-two years. Joshua, her husband, was a good farmer, but for a long while "unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster"; once, he had been swept clean of all, save hope, by a cyclone; once he had escaped only by a hair's-breadth losing his farm through the dishonesty of a friend.

Twenty-two years ago he had said: "Never mind, Judy, just let me make a few thousand dollars and you sha'n't have to work on the farm. I'll sell out and buy a store in town and be postmaster."

All his life Joshua had craved the leisurely honors of office. He, too, was social; he liked to talk, and he had a gift for telling stories. How many times in the years those two simple creatures had stocked that store I will not try to count.

But the years slowly had dragged hope and dreams away together. The little children came; they died, one after another, and the desolate mother felt, deep down in her heart, that a doctor near enough to come daily might have saved them. Then, when the keenness of their grief was blunted, and they went for comfort to their old fancies, time and again their savings had been wrenched from them. The man would have given up the fight in despair, but the woman clung to her shadowy hopes the more tenaciously. Finally, their patience and industry conquered. The great crop of 1891 had increased their savings beyond the amount necessary to pay off the last instalment of the mortgage; they would actually have some hundreds in money. Six thousand dollars and over stood to Joshua Crest's credit at the bank.

"Only," said Judith to Myron Dwight, "I cayn't help feeling kinder scary till the 3d of October is past and gone."

Myron was considered the cleverest young man in Delmar or the county. He had been in Iowa City to the university; he went every year to Chicago, to buy his goods, which added to his knowledge of the world and improved his toilets; he was talked about for the legislature. He was to be Joshua's

partner. Myron was almost like a son to Judith. She had loved him, petted him, prayed for him, and no one except his mother knew so well what things he liked best to eat. Myron's mother was Judith's best friend—why should I make a secret of it? She was the admired Erminie of the Homestead. She was a widow with this one child, whom she had educated out of the proceeds of a tiny bake-shop and an infinite ingenuity. They lived in Delmar. To live in Delmar may not seem to the world a brilliant lot, Delmar being a flat inland Iowa town, but, in contrast with the lonely farm life, a town with two churches, a bank, and shops looked like a populous paradise. In Delmar one could see people every day, just by looking out of the window.

"Seems like I couldn't wait to get to Delmar," says Judith, "but I cayn't feel to be quite happy till after the 3d."

Myron looks at her kindly from the height of his six feet two inches. She is such a wee creature—in a black frock made (but he does not know it) after a pattern from the Homestead—with her little peaked, wistful, timid face; her mild blue eyes peered out, from beneath a forehead wrinkled by the constant lifting of her eyebrows, to see distant objects on those wide and lonely plains. Her eyebrows are thin and gray, and so is her hair, which she curls on a slate pencil to resemble the hair of the ladies of Delmar. It would be pretty hair if she would not disfigure it.

"Yes," says Myron, "Lollard is a hard man to deal with, but you have the money in the Delmar Bank all right."

"It ain't in the Delmar Bank. It is in the other bank, Mr. Starling's bank, at Ranford."

Myron's black brows met. "Why, Uncle Joshua certainly told me he was going to put it in the Delmar Bank."

"Well, he did start to put it there, but he happened to hear Mr. Maxwell was a drinking man——"

"Maxwell! Why, he never was drunk in his life. He is as temperate a man as ever lived, and as honest."

"Joshua didn't hear anything about his honesty, but—it was this way: Joshua had gone to Delmar with that money, and he met Mr. Starling in town; well, I guess Mr. Starling come up to him and congratulated him on the high price he got for his wheat, and its being likely our corn would do well too; and Joshua told him what he got, and how he was on his way to put it in the bank. And, some way, that led them

into talking 'bout Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. Starling said he was sorry Maxwell was voting with the liquor party; and it come out that Mr. Maxwell sometimes took a glass of beer, himself. Mr. Starling seemed to feel real sorry about it."

Here Myron burst in: "Sorry? Why, he was just telling Uncle Josh that to prejudice him. He sorry, the hypocrite! Then, I dare say, when Uncle Josh wanted to put the money in his bank he wouldn't take it at first!"

"No, he truly wouldn't, Myron, but you know your Uncle Joshua feels so strong about the temperance question, because his sister, she married a drunkard; he said he wouldn't let his money go to help the breweries, and he fairly *made* Mr. Starling take it."

Myron was gloomily gnawing his mustache. "Did he get a deposit receipt?" said he.

"They went right on back to Ranford, and put the money in the bank there." She stole a worried glance at the young man's dark face; for years she had trusted to Myron's knowledge of the great, dim, wicked mystery that she called "the world." Even she suspected that Joshua was simple as a child. "I hope—oh, there ain't anything wrong about doing that way, is there, Myron?"

Myron laughed; it was all right, he guessed, and he would not stay for parleying, but swung his long legs over the barbed-wire fence in a handspring, and was off to seek Joshua. Judith caught her breath because she always expected to see him "catch" on the jagged line of iron. Poor Judith! hers was a soul that inclined to terror as the sparks fly upward. She was afraid of cows and mice and June-bugs and horses and hired men. She went to church behind staid old horses, feeling that she was risking life for her religion. When they first came to the prairie, she had been braver and younger and used to ride; but since the brown colt ran away and threw her on the railway track in front of a train of cars she had never mounted a horse. She told Mrs. Dwight that, if she had to choose between being shot and riding Starlight, the colt, she would ask to be shot, "because it is an easier death," said Mrs. Crest. Of course she lived in dread of the "hired men" except Axel Petersen, the latest hired man, who was to be married to a girl in Sweden, and had told her about the courtship. Axel was to buy the farm. Most of all, she feared tramps at harvest time; she feared them so much

that she had secretly bought a second-hand pistol that would not fire, which she locked up in a drawer; and she was, on the whole, rather more afraid of its exploding than of the tramps.

For a while she watched the tall, light figure bounding between the rows of corn, with the pensive admiration of age for youth's activity; then she walked slowly, a little stiffly, back to the house. It would soon be time for Joshua's supper; perhaps Myron would stop to supper, too, and it would be worth while to make pancakes.

But when, half an hour later, Joshua's shadow fell across the threshold, there was no tall young fellow behind him. Joshua stood in the doorway to watch her. The kitchen was large and sunny, and Judith had papered it with her own hands. Had the paper not been bought of a pedlar, to whom Judith had paid tribute because she was alone in the house and he had "such fierce kinder eyes," it probably would not have been a remnant of a pattern used in a country "opera-house," nor represented flowers of such startling size and color, nor needed to be eked out by a blue and gold ceiling paper. But Joshua said that the paper was a good quality, and he admired it with a trusting heart. He was a short, rather stout, florid little man, whose gray hair was brushed back from a large forehead, and whose blue eyes were as innocent as a child's. He stooped a little, because he had bent over a plough handle so much in his youth. He wore a short gray beard, but his mouth was bare and usually was attractive in its kindly, half-humorous smile. To-night he watched his wife gravely. But his first words were cheerful enough, "Mother, Axel's money will be here all right next month, and he can pay twelve hundred down and the rest on two, three, and four years' time."

"That's good," said Mrs. Crest; "but why didn't Myron come back with you, father?"

"He said he guessed he'd better hurry home." The old man did not look at her; he walked across the floor to the sink and began pumping; all the while he was conscious of his wife's eyes on his back.

"Father, did Myron tell you anything about that bank?"

Joshua's face was over the tin basin; a great splashing noise came to her, mingled with a grunt that the bank was

all right; but Joshua's neck, fair where the sun had not touched it, grew red and redder.

"Father, I jest know he did!" she cried; "he thinks Starling's bank ain't safe: that's why Myron wouldn't stop to supper—he didn't want to be questioned."

"Mother, you're the scariest critter alive! Starling is a good boy, he is the superintendent—no, that's his brother, but he is a professor; and he's a straight temperance man and I ain't going to believe a word ag'in' him."

Judith was trying to fry her cakes, the grease sputtered and hissed on the griddle and spattered on her bare wrist; she did not even know that it had burned her. Her mild eyes were glowing, she trembled, and her gentle voice was sharpened by pain as she answered: "Then he did talk to you. O father, don't, don't hide anything from me!"

"I ain't hiding nothing, mother. Myron, he thought you'd worry so, that's all; and 'tain't much he said, he's young and thinks he knows it all. Jest because some Chicago feller with his boots blacked has been stuffing Myron, he thinks Starling, we've all knowed from a boy, is going to bust up!"

"Father, for Heaven's sake, what did Myron say?"

"Well, if you'll be any wiser for hearin', he heard Steve had been speculating in buckets in Chicago," said the old man, with a visible pride over his own fluency with the terms of finance; "he has been going long, or else he has been going short, on wheat and kiting away with notes, and lost money; but I don't believe a word of it, myself."

Judith took up the cakes with shaking hands; she laid the plate on the table and put the griddle farther back on the stove in order to approach Joshua. Never since their little boy died had he seen his wife's face as it looked then.

"Joshua," she said, "if we lose that money, it means we'll have to spend all our days working on a mortgaged farm. If we cayn't pay up the 3d he can foreclose on us; and you *know* he is mean enough to do it; and if we borrow the money to pay him, we shall have to work it out! That's the best can happen to us; the worst is we'll be turned out—on the prairie—noways at all can we go to town, and—O father——"

"Hush, hush, Judy"—he tried to soothe her, stroking her withered hand and patting it—"come now, it will be all right; we'll go fast enough to Delmar. I didn't know you wanted it so awful much!"

"Wanted it!" she screamed, while the patience of years seemed to break down and her words rushed as a prairie fire spreads, "wanted it? Father, you ain't got no idee what it means to me to get out of this loneliness and be with God's folks again! I ain't had a peaceful day since the children died. I couldn't work hard enough to stop my thinking! I was scared all the while. I never said nothing 'bout it, for what good would it do? We'd got to live out on the farm; it would only pester you, and you had enough to stand, but all day I'd be thinking: what about the horses? what about the reaper? when it was going, and I'd expect every minute to see you brought home all bloody. If I'd a soul to speak to, it wouldn't 'a' been so bad, but I knew we couldn't afford a girl, and how'd we get one if we could? And every time the wind blowed, I was expecting a cyclone."

"Why, Judy, and you braver than any of us men when we did have a cyclone!"

"I had *got* to be brave then, but I was awful scared inside; but when I seen it coming, and you off, I *had* to loose the horses, for I knew the barn would go, and I got what I could down cellar, 'cause I knew that was the safest place. But I am always afraid of it coming again. But I won't mind it a bit in town; there's so many people. Oh, I can't tell you what it will be to be where I can see the neighbors passing, and go to church Sunday without riding! I'll have Myron, that's most like a son to me—he was born the same day of the month as our little Jo, father, and he's got the same sweet disposition, and eyes jest like Jo's eyes—don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes, mother," said the old man, sighing; in both their minds was the same vision of the love and joy and grief of their youth.

"Now, father, it seems like I couldn't run no risks. Say Myron and me are foolish, there ain't no risk in taking the money out, and there is to keep it in; jest to please me, father, won't you take it out?"

He had never denied her anything and he did not deny her now; he was frightened at her strange excitement, and told her to sit down and he would finish getting supper. "And, I tell you what I'll do, mother," said he, "I'll go to town to-morrow, though before the Lord I don't know how to take the time, and I'll inquire 'round, and, if there is any

talk 'bout the bank being bad, I'll draw the money sharp. But, you see, I hate to make mischief for Starling, who is a good boy, running down his bank, so I jest got to go cautious, ain't I? And it is a sight of money to draw out at a whack, now ain't it? Mebbe we'd better sorter give him warning, do like we'd be done by, you know, so he can git a good ready. What do you think?"

"I think you'd better go and do jest what Myron says."

"Myron don't know everything, mother," answered her husband, in a piqued tone. "You don't seem to guess I got any judgment of my own."

She saw she had made a mistake, and hastened to assure him that she knew how good his judgment was and the like things that wives say to their husbands; but there was a little rankle left. Myron had always disliked Starling from a boy, he said. Myron was prejudiced.

Nevertheless, he was good as his word. In the morning he drove to town. He inquired of the deacon of his church if Starling was sound. He had qualms of conscience lest such inquiry might be an injury to the bank, therefore he chose a known friend of Starling's for the interlocutor. "Sound?" exclaimed the deacon, whose name was on a note of Starling's at that moment, "sound, of course he is sound; but if you want to make him unsound—that is the way to go at it—start a run and you will make plenty of mischief!"

"I didn't mean to make any mischief," said Joshua, contritely. "I ain't that kind, but you see my wife got scared——"

"Does she know anything about business?" asked the deacon, with a caustic accent on the word; and Joshua felt that he cut the sorry figure of a man that was cajoled, by his wife, into doing unkind as well as unbusiness-like actions.

The deacon left him, wretchedly cleaning his boots on the wooden sidewalk to conceal his embarrassment, and hurried after Starling, himself.

"I will get that note back to-day," thought the deacon; "he was so liberal loaning without asking security that I couldn't very well refuse, but he has got to see me through!"

Joshua was in two minds about going home; in the event he stayed, deciding to have plenty of proof to fetch Judy that she was a fool to be so scared. The next time he applied to a rich lawyer of the town, who stared at his question: "Anything the matter with Starling? What makes you think that?"

"I did hear"—thus Joshua made a feeble stand—"that he was sorter speckilatin' in Chicago opinions."

"Opinions? Do you mean *options*? I heard so too, and wrote to Chicago; his name was not known to any one. I'd be a little careful, if I was you, talking about bankers' credit these days. You have been fooled by some smart Alick, I guess, Mr. Crest."

Crestfallen and rebuffed, Joshua climbed into his wagon. Had he gone to Myron, he would have discovered that it was suspected that it was under the names of other men that all Starling's speculations were made; but Joshua regarded Myron as the cause of his griefs.

He told Judith that he had been laughed at for his pains, and that the bank was good as gold. But he did not convince her, and, indeed, as he repeated the conversations to her they lost something of their potency as approvers of Sterling.

The next day she would have walked to Delmar to consult with Myron, had she not heard from a passing neighbor that he was gone to Chicago. She said nothing to Joshua, but at night he said to her: "To-morrow I got to go to the Hallers to help them thrash; they're dretful behind with their wheat, and I cayn't feel it's Christian to let them two boys, that ain't got no father, mabbe lose a lot of wheat cause they ain't got help enough at the threshing-machine; but day after, I'm a goin' to see Myron and to give him a check to draw out that money. I sent word to Starling by Axel yesterday."

She thanked him warmly, and did not express the fear tormenting her that the notice would, in some undiscerned way, defeat all their intentions.

That night she slept ill. She rose early and tried to cheer herself by making Joshua's favorite German coffee-cake, to be ready against his return at night.

She set her sponge, and was arrived at the stage of dough when Myron Dwight rode up on his fast horse. Myron looked cheerful, but the horse shook flecks of foam off his nostrils as he tossed his head. Myron asked for Joshua, and rode away on a gallop, singing out, "Tell you all about it when we come back, Aunt Judith."

Judith waited until dark, keeping supper hot. She sat on the doorstep and thought. It seemed to her that she had never thought in that way before during her life.

The moon was in the sky, when afar, on the sea of prairie, she discerned Myron Dwight coming alone. With a sinking heart she saw that he came in the direction of Ranford and that he was riding a tired horse. He must pass the house to reach the Delmar road. She waited for him.

"Won't you come in and have a cup of coffee, Myron?" she begged; "I got some hot on the stove. Where have you been so long? O Myron, please tell me, please don't put me off!"

Myron's face changed. "You're right," he muttered; then in a louder tone: "I won't put you off, aunty; I have been to Ranford with Uncle Josh, and—well, we got there after banking hours and could do nothing. I couldn't get Uncle Josh away from that infernal machine. But he is going back to Ranford first thing next morning, and so am I. In fact, I shall go home and see mother, and then take the train over there to-night."

"O Myron, is the bank going to bust?"

"I guess not before we get our money out, Aunt Judy. Well, good-by."

As she watched him out of sight, the same tense look was in her face that had been there while she sat on the step—thinking.

Joshua came, no long time after. He began to talk in a rambling way about the Hallers and the day's work, and how tired the horses were, and she made no effort to question him; but presently he broke out, with a groan: "Judy, I got to tell you. I guess Myron was right about Starling."

"Yes, I guess he was."

"He has been looking him up in Chicago. • He does speculate and he has lost money. And Myron showed me a printed book where they'd got his name down, and he ain't got good credit at all, mother. And they got Maxwell there, real high credit——"

"How do they ever find out?"

"I guess the lawyers tell 'em; they don't mind spying and telling on folks. It is a mighty queer looking book, sorter looks like a algebra. Well, Judy, we went to Ranford and we got there too late, but I am going to be there to-morrow. Don't you bother to git me a hot breakfast, though; a cold bite is all I want."

It was not like Judy to pass this over in silence, yet she

made no protest. Presently Joshua said that he would go to bed. "Good night," said Judith. She came over to him and kissed his forehead. "You know I know you did all you could, Joshua, don't you?" she said.

"I guess we ain't goin' to begin to quarrel now, whatever happens, Judy," said he, "but—we are old foks to have to being life over again, mother. I kinder wonder at Starling taking that money of me; he must 'a' knowed how things was with him—but I guess he was hopeful; well, one good thing they all was sayin' at the threshin' to-day, how uncommon strong I was for my years. So if we have to begin again——"

"We ain't going to have to," said Judith.

Thus she cheered the dispirited man, nor did he see the placid look fade from her face as long as he was awake to see.

After he slept, she crept out of bed and dressed herself quietly. She opened a closet and a drawer, taking something out of each. The moonlight filled the room; at the door she paused to look at the sleeper, whose face was pale in that bloodless radiance. Her look was tenderer than a caress. With infinite caution she moved down the uncarpeted, creaking stairs. She stole about the kitchen in her stocking feet until she had placed on the table the simple meal which Joshua desired. "'Cause maybe I might be prevented from getting home, and there ain't no need for him to go hungry!" she thought.

Her preparations completed, she wrapped a thick shawl about her, tied her decent black bonnet under her chin, and went out into the moonlight. She locked the door behind her, although not without pondering whether this could be safe since there was the risk of fire; but there was the risk of thieves and murderers as well, and another door and the windows would remain for escape if the house took fire; therefore she locked it, in the end. All she carried with her was a black satin bag (embroidered with a crimson flower) which had been given her by Mrs. Dwight. Inside she still kept the card bearing the inscription, "From Erminie to Lucetta."

"I dare say she'll think it's dretful wicked, but I cayn't help it. There ain't no other way," thought the old woman.

She stood for a second looking about the farm bathed in moonlight. A silver pathway narrowed over the expanse of wheat stubble into the horizon perspective. One could faintly

distinguish the color of the leaves on the poplar-trees and the yellow sides of the bulging haymows. A dotted line of fire swept across the silver path, the west-bound train. "Oh, dearie me, dearie me!" groaned Judith, "I got to stop him before he runs away!"

She had thought it all out, and, while she shivered with fright and anguish, she did not hesitate once.

Huddled in her shawl, she opened the barn door and went to the colt's stall. Her eyes travelled wistfully to the farm horses munching their corn—only her eyes, for she knew they were too tired for a midnight ride. Tremblingly she untied the terrible colt, distracting his attention as much as possible by some corn, and keeping as far from his uneasy feet as her short arms would let her. The colt tossed his head and lashed his tail, and the other horses made ugly noises on the floor. Cold drops stood on Judith's pale face: nevertheless she saddled Starlight and led him to the buggy, where she managed to mount. The saddle was a man's saddle. "Jest as well," thought the rider, "I can stick on better, and I *got* to stick on, 'cause if I get off on the prairie I never in this world can git on the critter again!"

Thus she set forth, a queer little shape, astride her man's saddle, with her shawl blown behind her. The station at Ranford is a small wooden building with a long platform. At night it has a deserted, dreary aspect, with the stove glimmering redly through the open space of window, the locked doors, and the lonely telegraph operator dozing at his desk. Behind the station is a fence. To this fence rode Judith, just as the town clock struck ten. She climbed laboriously off the horse's back, and tied him to the fence, by a knot possible only to a woman.

"Oh, Lord be praised! at least I'm off that hoss' back!" cried the rider. "I guv myself up for lost fifty times to-night!"

She walked up and down the platform, waiting for the banker Starling. Not until the Chicago train had gone without him would she go. She had determined to see him that night; if he did not come to the train, she would go to the house; but she was fully persuaded by some mysterious and feminine intuition that Starling meant to fly.

The half-hour struck. "It's getting dretful late and unseemly," groaned the old wife, who had not been out alone at night for twenty years, "but I cayn't help it."

The night air was bitterly chill; she did not think of her own tingling feet and shivering frame, but the horse, the colt Joshua hoped to sell for a hundred dollars—*he* might catch cold! Had she better wrap her shawl about him or walk him around the little open plot of ground to exercise his muscles? In one case she would be cold, in the other—she did not dare undertake the other! So she wrapped the colt's flanks in the warm woollen, pinning it about the neck; and an astonishing looking beast he was, thus caparisoned, to be sure. Then Judith solemnly jumped up and down and smote her pipe-stems of arms together to keep warm. The three-quarters struck.

A lantern flickered at the corner of the village street, the ticket agent was coming to the station. From the opposite direction came some one else. Two strides placed her in front of this man as he mounted the platform, a slight, well-dressed man, with a neat travelling-bag in his hand. He had observed Judith's grotesque antics already. "Mad!" was his decision, perhaps, for he started nervously and essayed to edge by her.

"Mr. Starling," spoke the old woman in her quavering sweet pipe, "Mr. Starling, my husband tried to get our money from you this afternoon, and you wouldn't give it to him; will you please give it to me?"

"Why, Mrs. Crest, I didn't recognize you," exclaimed the banker, smoothing his brow; "yes, Mr. Crest came after the bank was closed; if you will go there to-morrow morning at nine, it will be all right."

"I want it now, I got to have it now!" She had slipped her hand in her little black bag.

"But, my dear madam, I haven't got it with me. I don't carry the bank in my pocket."

"I tell you I got to have my money. You sha'n't carry it away. Oh, for the Lord's sake, be merciful to us, Mr. Starling, it's everything Joshua and me has saved working hard for thirty years! We'll lose our farm if we don't have it!"

Her voice rose shrilly, and there were people back on the platform now.

"You fool! I haven't got it," he snarled, pushing her aside. He could hear the whistle of the approaching train for Chicago; it was stopping at Delmar, five miles away.

Instead of recoiling, she flung herself on him, and simultaneously he felt the icy rim of a revolver at his ear.

"Then God have mercy on your wicked soul, for you are a dead man," cried Judith Crest. "I give you time for one prayer—unless you move——" He could see her face set in a ghastly fixity of despair and resolve, the pistol was cold as the grave; worse, there was a hideous wriggle about the thing as if the desperate creature's hand trembled—what if her finger slipped!

He rolled his eyes at her; he did not venture to move his head. "Why can't you wait a minute? Where's your check?"

"Never mind my check, I cayn't wait."

"Wait!" he cried frantically, "suppose I give you the money. How much is it?"

"It's six thousand two hun——"

"Well, take that infernal thing off my head and I will get it for you."

"You got to get it with it on your head. I don't trust you. You got the use of your hands. Take the money out and count it and put it in my bag."

Starling could see the distant headlight of the train. He ground an oath between his teeth, but he pulled out his pocketbook.

"Walk along nearer the light or strike a match on your pants; I cayn't see the bills," the relentless, quavering old voice went on. He did light a match, for the desire to get away on that swiftly nearing train overmastered everything else. She hitched her bag further down her wrist and so held first one then another match, until he had counted out the sum. "Six thousand one hundred and fifty—silver certificates, yes, they're good. There had ought to be two dollars more——"

The buzz and rumble of the train was heard more distinctly. Starling tore a five-dollar note from a wad of bank notes and threw it at her. "Now will you let me go?"

"I guess I ain't got no right to keep you. I ain't got no change, but I'll send it to Mis' Starling. Hold your hands in front of you and you can run."

Five minutes later, Myron Dwight could not believe his eyes as they showed him Judith weeping on the platform.

"O Myron," she sobbed, "I tied the colt up so tight I cayn't untie him, and I am so frightened!"

Joshua did not discover his wife's absence in the morning. He supposed she was out in her garden, and he ate the breakfast that she had made ready and hurried away through the usual exit of the kitchen door without suspicion. He was one of the first to file into Starling's bank that morning. The young man at the desk looked at him, and then retired for consultation with the other young man. "I ain't going to keep up the farce any longer," said the other young man, "Mr. Crest, we haven't got six hundred dollars in the vault."

That was the reason why Starling's bank closed its doors, some hours earlier than the fugitive had anticipated.

Joshua did not speak a word. He nodded to some men that he knew, and went out, not quite steadily, to his wagon. Myron and his own wife were standing by it.

Joshua did not seem surprised. "Mother," said he in a dry, clear tone, "I've lost all that money."

"No, no, you ain't, father," said Judith, "I got it all, here."

"She met Starling at the depot, and somehow, she won't tell me how, she got him to give her back the money." This was Myron, who remained in a bewildered state of mind, having considerately put Judith to bed at the hotel without agitating her by questions.

"But, mother, you hadn't got no check; how could you git the money?" said Joshua.

Judith was sobbing: "Oh, I guess you won't be able to forgive me. I didn't have no check; I made him give me the money——"

She had been taking the notes out of her bag. Myron put in his fingers and drew out the pistol.

"Ah-h," he exclaimed, "I perceive. Why, Aunt Judith, you dear little highwayman!"

No one else knows of it, no one else would believe if he did know, Mrs. Crest is such a harmless, timid woman; but Myron Dwight, now prospering and helping Joshua to prosper, keeps the pistol in his drawer as a memento. No one else but he knows another interesting fact—that pistol was not loaded!

ETCHING: THE RETURN

BY M. REESE

An aged negro finds his way back to his home after many years, but the cabin, where he left his wife and children, has become a ruin and the little village—he knew so well—a noisy, bustling town.

“Yes, sah, I’s gwine home. Bin ten year since I lef’, an’ many’s de time since, I’s seed Callie standin’ in de do’, so fat ’n’ black, an’ de chillun all ’roun’ watchin’ daddy go; an’ dat morckin’-bird whut uster sing up in de big oak-tree, wuz singin’ er far’well.

“De ole woman’ll be waitin’, ’n’ de chillun ’ll git de little ole boat, ’n’ we go down de creek whar de fish am so thick. Law, sah! yer oughter see dat creek, hit so thick wid de long grass ’n’ purple lilies—an’ on de banks de jes’mine ’n’ vi’lets grow so close dey comes down ter de water, like ter git er drink, hit so clear ’n’ cole.

“De town h’ain’t much, jes’ de co’t-house an’—Fer Lord sake, sah! Whut all dem things p’intin’ up ter de sky, ’n’ whut dat de sun shinin’ on so bright? Steeples? Law, chile, dis here town ain’t got no sich! Changed? I dunno—I neber thought ob dat.”

Passing gayly painted houses and hotels he finds the old court-house square gone. He meets many people, but no familiar face. Following the lane he crosses the well-known creek, now a canal. The roar of machinery breaks the stillness. Entering the little patch of ground, he sees his cabin rotted and overgrown. He goes inside—all is desolate—not a soul. The wife and children? He hears a step and turning sees an old man—they look intently, then——

“L-o-r-d er-mitey!—Unk’ Isaac!”

“Tom!—whut—whut de marter wid dis here town? ’Pears like hit—cunjured!”

“Laws, h’ain’t yer hyeered? De boom! An’ hit am cunjured, wid phosphate.”

“Whar Callie—an’ —de chillun?”

“Why, man! Callie done dead! An’ de chillun gone, dunno whar.”

The breath of the pines comes up from the hills, and twilight, stealing on, shrouds the form of an old man who, with bowed head, rests on the step of his abandoned cabin.

MAJOR NAMBY

BY WILKIE COLLINS

An elderly spinster, of exquisite sensibilities, discourses feelingly on the torture her nerves are subjected to by her neighbor—a horrid man of confiding disposition and great lung power.

I am a single lady—single, you will please to understand, entirely because I have refused many excellent offers. Pray don't imagine from this that I am old. Some women's offers come at long intervals, and other women's offers come close together. Mine came remarkably close together—so, of course, I cannot possibly be old. Not that I presume to describe myself as absolutely young, either; so much depends on people's points of view. I have heard female children of the ages of eighteen or nineteen called young ladies. This seems to me to be ridiculous—and I have held that opinion, without once wavering from it, for more than ten years past. It is, after all, a question of feeling; and—shall I confess it?—I feel so young!

I live in the suburbs, and I have bought my house. The major lives in the suburbs, next door to me, and *he* has bought his house. I don't object to this, of course. I merely mention it to make things straight.

Major Namby has been twice married. His first wife—dear, dear! how can I express it? Shall I say, with vulgar abruptness, that his first wife had a family? And must I descend into particulars, and add that they are four in number, and that two of them are twins? Well, the words are written; and if they will do over again for the same purpose, I beg to repeat them in reference to the second Mrs. Namby (still alive), who also had a family, and is—no, I really cannot say, is likely to go on having one. There are certain limits in a case of this kind, and I think I have reached them. Permit me simply to state that the second Mrs. Namby has three children at present. These, with the first Mrs. Namby's four, make a total of seven. The seven are composed of five girls and two boys. And the first Mrs. Namby's family all have one particular kind of constitution, and the second Mrs. Namby's family all have another particular kind of constitution. Let me explain once more that I merely mention these little matters, and that I don't object to them.

My complaint against Major Namby is, in plain terms, that he transacts the whole of his domestic business in his front garden. Whether it arises from natural weakness of memory, from total want of a sense of propriety, or from a condition of mind which is closely allied to madness of the eccentric sort, I cannot say, but the major certainly does sometimes partially and sometimes entirely forget his private family matters, and the necessary directions connected with them, while he is inside the house, and does habitually remember them, and repair all omissions, by bawling through his windows at the top of his voice, as soon as he gets outside the house. It never seems to occur to him that he might advantageously return indoors, and there mention what he has forgotten, in a private and proper way. The instant the lost idea strikes him, which it invariably does either in his front garden or in the roadway outside his house, he roars for his wife, either from the gravel walk, or over the low wall, and (if I may use so strong an expression) empties his mind to her in public, without appearing to care whose ears he wearies, whose delicacy he shocks, or whose ridicule he invites. If the man is not mad, his own small family fusses have taken such complete possession of all his senses that he is quite incapable of noticing anything else, and perfectly impenetrable to the opinions of his neighbors. Let me show that the grievance of which I complain is no slight one, by giving a few examples of the general persecution that I suffer, and the occasional shocks that are administered to my delicacy, at the coarse hands of Major Namby.

We will say it is a fine warm morning. I am sitting in my front room, with the window open, absorbed over a deeply interesting book. I hear the door of the next house bang; I look up, and see the major descending the steps into his front garden.

He walks—no, he marches—half-way down the front garden path, with his head high in the air, and his chest stuck out, and his military cane fiercely flourished in his right hand. Suddenly he stops, stamps with one foot, knocks up the hinder part of the brim of his extremely curly hat with his left hand, and begins to scratch at that singularly disagreeable-looking roll of fat red flesh in the back of his neck (which scratching, I may observe, in parentheses, is always a sure sign, in the case of this horrid man, that a lost domestic idea has suddenly

come back to him). He waits a moment in the ridiculous position just described, then wheels around on his heel, looks up at the first-floor window, and, instead of going back into the house to mention what he has forgotten, bawls out fiercely from the middle of the walk:

"Matilda!"

I hear his wife's voice—a shockingly shrill one; but what can you expect of a woman who has been seen, over and over again, in a slatternly, striped wrapper as late as two o'clock in the afternoon?—I hear his wife's voice answer from inside the house:

"Yes, dear?"

"I said it was a south wind."

"Yes, dear."

"It isn't a south wind."

"Lor', dear."

"It's a sou'east. I won't have Georgina taken out to-day. (Georgina is one of the first Mrs. Namby's family, and they are all weak in the chest.) Where's nurse?"

"Here, sir."

"Nurse, I won't have Jack allowed to run. Whenever that boy perspires, he catches cold. Hang up his hoop. If he cries, take him into my dressing-room, and show him the birch rod. Matilda!"

"Yes, dear."

"What the devil do they mean by daubing all that grease over Mary's hair! It's beastly to see it—do you hear?—beastly! Where's Pamby?" Pamby is the unfortunate work-woman who makes and mends the family linen.

"Here, sir."

"Pamby, what are you about now?"

No answer. Pamby or somebody else giggles faintly. The major flourishes his cane in a fury.

"Why the devil don't you answer me? I give you three seconds to answer me, or leave the house. One—two—three. Pamby, what are you about now?"

"If you please, sir, I'm doing something——"

"What?"

"Something particular for baby, sir."

"Drop it directly, whatever it is. Nurse!"

"Yes, sir."

"Mind the crossings. Don't let the children sit down if

they are hot. Don't let them speak to the other children. Don't let them get playing with strange dogs. Don't let them mess their things. And above all, don't bring Master Jack back in a perspiration. Is there anything more before I go out?"

"No, sir."

"Matilda, is there anything more?"

"No, dear."

"Pamby, is there anything more?"

"No, sir."

Here the domestic colloquy ends for the time being. Will any sensitive person—especially a person of my own sex—please to imagine what I must suffer as a delicate single lady, at having all these family details obtruded on my attention, whether I like it or not, in the major's rasping martial voice and in the shrill answering screams of the women inside? It is hard enough to endure this sort of persecution when one is alone; but it is far worse to be exposed to it—as I am constantly—in the presence of visitors, whose conversation is necessarily interrupted, whose ears are necessarily shocked, whose very stay in my house is necessarily shortened by Major Namby's public way of managing his private concerns.

Only the other day, my old, dear, and most valued friend Lady Malkinshaw was sitting with me, and was entering at great length into the interesting story of her second daughter's unhappy marriage engagement, and of the dignified manner in which the family ultimately broke it off. For a quarter of an hour or so our interview continued to be delightfully uninterrupted. At the end of that time, however, just as Lady Malkinshaw, with the tears in her eyes, was beginning to describe the effects of her daughter's dreadful disappointment on the poor girl's mind and looks, I heard the door of the major's house bang as usual, and, looking out of the window in despair, saw the major himself strut half-way down the walk, stop, scratch violently at his roll of red flesh, wheel round so as to face the house, consider a little, pull his tablets out of his waistcoat pocket, shake his head over them, and then look up at the front windows, preparatory to bawling as usual at the degraded female members of his household. Lady Malkinshaw, quite ignorant of what was coming, happened, at the same moment, to be proceeding with her pathetic story in these terms:

"I do assure you, my poor dear girl behaved throughout with the heroism of a martyr when I had told her of the vile wretch's behavior, breaking it to her as gently as I possibly could; and when she had a little recovered, I said to her——"

"Matilda!"

The major's rasping voice sounded louder than ever as he bawled out that dreadful name, just at the wrong moment. Lady Malkinshaw started as if she had been shot. I put down the window in despair; but the glass was no protection to our ears—Major Namby can roar through a brick wall. I apologized—I declared solemnly that my next-door neighbor was mad—I entreated Lady Malkinshaw to take no notice, and to go on. That sweet woman immediately complied. I burn with indignation when I think of what followed. Every word from the Nambys' garden (which I distinguish below by parentheses) came, very slightly muffled by the window, straight into my room, and mixed itself up with her lady ship's story in this inexpressibly ridiculous and impertinent manner:

"Well," my kind and valued friend proceeded, "as I was telling you, when the first natural burst of sorrow was over, I said to her——"

"Yes, dear Lady Malkinshaw," I murmured, encouragingly.

"I said to her——"

("By jingo, I've forgotten something! Matilda! when I made my memorandum of errands, how many had I to do?")

"My dearest, darling child," I said——"

("Pamby! how many errands did your mistress give me to do?")

"I said: 'My dearest, darling child——' "

("Nurse! how many errands did your mistress give me to do?")

"My own love," I said——"

("Pooh! Pooh! I tell you, I had four errands to do, and I've only got three of 'em written down. Check me off, all of you—I'm going to read my errands.")

"Your own proper pride, love," I said, 'will suggest to you——' "

("Gray powder for baby.")

——"the necessity of making up your mind, my angel, to——' "

("Row the plumber for infamous condition of back kitchen sink.")

———"to return all the wretch's letters, and——'"

("Speak to the haberdasher about patching Jack's shirts.")

———"all his letters and presents, darling. You need only make them up into a parcel, and write inside——'"

("Matilda! is that all?")

———"and write inside——'"

("Pamby! is that all?")

———"and write inside——'"

("Nurse! is that all?")

———"I have my mother's sanction for making one last request to you. It is this——'"

("What have the children got for dinner to-day?")

———"it is this: Return me my letters, as I have returned yours. You will find inside——'"

("A shoulder of mutton and onion sauce? And a devilish good dinner, too.")

The coarse wretch roared out those last shocking words cheerfully, at the top of his voice. Hitherto, Lady Malkinshaw had preserved her temper with the patience of an angel; but she began—and who can wonder?—to lose it at last.

"It is really impossible, my dear," she said, rising from her chair, "to continue any conversation while that very intolerable person persists in talking to his family from his front garden. No! I really cannot go on—I cannot indeed."

Just as I was apologizing to my sweet friend for the second time, I observed, to my great relief (having my eye still on the window), that the odious major had apparently come to the end of his domestic business for that morning, and had made up his mind at last to relieve us of his presence. I distinctly saw him put his tablets back in his pocket, wheel round again on his heel, and march straight to the garden gate. I waited until he had his hand on the lock to open it; and then, when I felt that we were quite safe, I informed dear Lady Malkinshaw that my detestable neighbor had at last taken himself off, and, throwing open the window again to get a little fresh air, begged and entreated her to oblige me by resuming the charming conversation.

"Where was I!" inquired my distinguished friend.

"You were telling me what you recommended your poor darling to write inside her enclosure," I answered.

"Ah, yes—so I was. Well, my dear, she controlled herself by an admirable effort, and wrote exactly what I told her. You will excuse a mother's partiality, I am sure—but I think I never saw her look so lovely—so mournfully lovely—I should say, as when she was writing those last lines to the man who had so basely trifled with her. The tears came into my eyes as I looked at her sweet pale cheeks; and I thought to myself——"

("Nurse! which of the children was sick, last time, after eating onion sauce?")

He had come back again?—the monster had come back again, from the garden gate, to shout that unwarrantable, atrocious question in at his nursery window!

Lady Malkinshaw bounced off her chair at the first note of his horrible voice, and changed toward me instantly—as if it had been my fault—in the most alarming and most unexpected manner. Her ladyship's face became awfully red; her ladyship's head trembled excessively; her ladyship's eyes looked straight into mine with an indescribable fierceness.

"Why am I thus insulted?" inquired Lady Malkinshaw, with a slow and dignified sternness which froze the blood in my veins. "What do you mean by it?" continued her ladyship, with a sudden rapidity of utterance that quite took my breath away.

Before I could remonstrate with my friend for visiting her natural irritation on poor innocent me; before I could declare that I had seen the major actually open his garden gate to go away, the provoking brute's voice burst in on us again.

"Ha, yes!" we heard him growl to himself in a kind of shameless domestic soliloquy. "Yes, yes, yes—Sophy was sick, to be sure. Curious. All Mrs. Namby's step-children have weak chests and strong stomachs. All Mrs. Namby's own children have weak stomachs and strong chests. I have a strong stomach and a strong chest. Pamby!"

"I consider this," continued Lady Malkinshaw, literally glaring at me, in the fulness of her indiscriminate exasperation—"I consider this to be unwarrantable and unladylike. I beg to know——"

"Where's Bill?" burst in the major from below, before she could add another word. "Matilda! Nurse! Pamby! where's Bill? I didn't bid Bill good-by—hold him up at the window, one of you!"

"My dear Lady Malkinshaw," I remonstrated, "why blame me? What have I done?"

"Done!" repeated her ladyship. "Done! All that is most unfriendly, most unwarrantable, most unladylike, most——"

"Ha! ha! ha-a-a!" roared the major, shouting her ladyship down, and stamping about the garden in fits of fond paternal laughter. "Bill, my boy, how are you? There's a young Turk for you! Pull up his frock—I want to see his jolly legs——"

Lady Malkinshaw screamed and rushed to the door. I sank into a chair, and clasped my hands in despair.

"Ha! ha! ha-a-a-a! What calves the dog's got! Pamby! look at his calves! Aha! bless his heart, his legs are the model of his father's! The Namby build, Matilda! the Namby build, every inch of him. Kick again, Bill—kick out like mad. I say, ma'am! I beg your pardon, ma'am!——"

"*Ma'am!*" I ran to the window. Was the major actually daring to address Lady Malkinshaw, as she passed indignantly, on her way out, down my front garden? He was! The odious monster was pointing out his—his, what shall I say? his undraped offspring to the notice of my outraged visitor.

"Look at him, ma'am. If you're a judge of children, look at him. There's a two-year-old for you! Ha! ha! ha-a-a-a! Show the lady your legs, Bill—kick out for the lady, you dog, kick out!"

THE GUEST CHAMBER

BY GEORGE ANNABLE

No more fitting retribution could have been devised for a life of crime than that which forms the climax of this story, nor one that, at a flash, would so clearly reveal a terrible truth to a dimly groping, half-awakened soul. Written for Short Stories.

For many years a small hut stood in an opening in the heart of the Black Forest. There was not another dwelling within twenty miles. The hut was solitary, as the forest was a solitude. An old couple of singularly simple habits had lived here for forty years. A half-acre of forest land cleared away was their garden; and twice a year they trudged on foot to the nearest market and sold what they could spare from their own necessities. Aside from this journey they never went a mile from the cottage door.

It needed but one look at the old man's mumbling lips and bleared eyes, or to see the childish way he followed his wife about and did her bidding, to know that he was a foolish, harmless fellow, half idiot, half paralytic. As for the woman, her face showed more intelligence, but was even less pleasing. Her small blue eyes were crafty and relentless, and her parchment skin had sunk into forbidding lines about the mouth. However, she kept herself, as well as the foolish old man, and the cottage spotlessly clean. If she had been expecting the arrival of some dear friend every moment, she could not have been more scrupulous about sweeping the clay floor of her hut, or more careful to keep the husk mattress in the sleeping-loft fresh and dry.

She and her husband worked side by side in the garden, seldom exchanging a word, in stolid peasant fashion, except when she called out, "Here, Ludwig!"—wanting him to do something for her. The old man followed her, in doors and out, his trembling lower lip hanging down, his vacant eyes watching her motions and trying to imitate them, like a small child.

Silently they worked together during the day, and silently they sat and smoked together on the bench in front of the house in the evening.

As it began to grow dusk, the old woman (whom her husband called Hunta) would take the pipe from her blackened

teeth and hobble down to the road that rose and fell, and crept away into the darkness of the forest. As long as the light lasted, she would stand, looking intently down the road, shading her eyes with both gnarled and crooked hands; even after night had come she waited—listening for many moments longer. Was she expecting guests?

Twelve years before, a man had stopped at nightfall and asked for a place to rest. He was made welcome, as the family depended largely for their living upon the occasional travellers through the forest. The man looked not only tired, but sick, ate the merest mouthful of supper, and went up early to the clean little loft, with its bed of sweet-smelling husks. He did not come down the next morning. Toward noon Hunta went up to waken him, thinking he would want to continue his journey, and found him lying dead, with a stain of blood on the pillow under his cheek. There seemed to be nothing for them to do but bury him. It often happened that for six weeks together no one came near the hut, and Hunta's brain was so slow in expedients that it never occurred to her to go twenty miles, to the nearest town, for assistance, or for a purpose other than to sell cabbage and potatoes twice a year. Otherwise some one might have come out to help give the stranger a decent burial, and see if there was any clew to his identity.

But to Hunta, a dead man was a dead man: there was nothing to do but bury him. So with only Ludwig, like a terrified child, to help her, she tried to make some such preparations as she had seen once or twice in her life. Under the stranger's vest, she found a heavy leather belt. She looked it over, felt of it, and at last cut it open. Handful after handful of gold coins slid out on the floor. Ludwig sprang to snatch some of the shining objects, but Hunta held his hands back.

"No, Ludwig, no!" she cried out sharply, "they are for Erfurt: we'll keep them for him, there's a good Ludwig." Trembling with eagerness, she gathered the gold into her apron, and Ludwig never saw it again. He dug a grave in the forest for the stranger, and together they carried him out and buried him.

After Hunta had gone back to the house Ludwig, for reasons of his own, drove a large iron spike up to its head in the

tree, and rolled a stone on the grave, which he had levelled off so smoothly, and covered with sod so neatly, that no one would have known the ground had been disturbed. After that, he came out once a day, rubbed his fingers over the spike-head, and sat on the stone for a few minutes, chattering and mumbling in his senseless, uncanny way.

From this time on, Hunta seemed changed. Not that the death of the poor gentleman made her sad, but she thought night and day of Erfurt and the hidden gold. Erfurt was her only child, and she loved him as all mothers, good and bad, love a son who is handsome and masterful. He had always been good to her, had never beaten her as many a son, that she knew of, did his mother; and when he went away, years ago, he had said in his hearty way: "Save all you can from the garden, mother, and I'll save all I can, and after a while I'll come back and we'll put it all together, and you shall go away from this little hut, and keep house for me."

Since then she had never wasted a potato or a cabbage, or a morsel of goat's-milk curd. All had been taken to market, yet she had not been able to save, in all, one fiftieth part as much as she had found in the leather belt.

She began to have wicked thoughts. She knew where a plant grew in the forest that her mother had told her about. You might steep it in goat's milk and no one would know by the taste that there was anything in it; but if a man were to take even a half-cup of it at night, he would never waken in the morning.

She thought of the small sum she had been able to save. Erfurt might come back any day; and, when he saw how little money she had, he would think she had not cared to help him, or wished to live with him, when the one thing she did care for was to have a splendid boxful of good gold coins, and be able to say: "Here Erfurt, they are yours; enough to buy a good house, and a cow, and a double acre."

In imagination, Hunta often went through the whole process of steeping the little green leaves in milk, mixing some of it with the cakes she would be baking for some traveller's supper, and ending by pouring the rest of it into his mug of milk. Then she would picture her waking in the morning to find him still and harmless, and her joy at the gain of another handful of beautiful gold for Erfurt.

She went through these scenes so often that at last it

seemed as though she had already done the deed; and when a man stopped one night, and strode around arrogantly while he waited for his supper, it seemed almost a matter of course that she should do in reality what she had so often fancied herself doing. Many times during the night she awoke, crept to the foot of the ladder leading to the loft, and listened.

Once she heard groans and struggling breaths, and then she hurried back to bed.

In the morning she found the stranger just as her mother had said; and, sewed into his doublet, were gold pieces larger than Hunta had ever before seen. When she called Ludwig up into the loft to help lift the body down, he expressed no surprise, but mumbled and laughed in his meaningless way, and afterward dug the grave, drove another spike into a tree and rolled up the stone as he had done once before.

During the next twelve years, Hunta laid aside many a handful of precious coins; and it took Ludwig some time to go the rounds in the forest, searching out the nail-heads, sitting for a few moments on each stone kicking his feet about among the leaves, and muttering strange things to himself.

Hunta felt no reproaches from her conscience. Her moral nature was slow-moving and ophidian, and she had been taught the harm of being found out rather than the wrong of the sin itself. Moreover, her love for her son was about as narrow and exclusive as the tiger's love for its young, and she was capable of crunching the bones of victims in her lair, with just as little reflection, if Erfurt was to gain by it.

She felt perfectly secure against the danger of being found out, as long as there was no one near but Ludwig—who watched whatever was going on as the blackbirds did, and was just as likely to make an intelligent report of it.

It happened that there had been no one through the forest for many weeks. Hunta was making her usual observation of the road from under her twisted fingers, when a horseman clattered up, and wanted to know if he could have some supper and a night's lodging.

"I can only give you a clean bed in the loft, and a plain supper," answered Hunta, in her humble manner.

"Well, be quick about it; I had an early dinner," said the stranger, leaping from his horse, and stretching his legs as though he were tired from long riding.

It did not take Hunta long to see that the traveller was dressed in the finest of riding-coats, and his horse fitted up with such trappings as she had never before seen. Hunta hurried in to make supper ready, and kept her watchful eyes on him through the little window, as he swaggered around the yard with Ludwig at his heels. She saw that he frequently put his hand on one side of his waistcoat, as if to be sure something was there, and she knew what that meant. It was a sign that had never failed yet.

At supper he showed himself very friendly; asked if the old man was her husband, if she did not find the forest lonely, and if she had any children. She told him she had one son; and he asked her more questions in such hearty, simple fashion that, in spite of his unprepossessing appearance and the ugly fringe of red beard around his chin, and the lanky hair that fell over his collar, she was led on to talk more than she had for many years.

So, while she watched him sip his mug of milk, she told him how Erfurt went to Sopdorf to make his fortune; and what a splendid lad he was, with curls all over his head, and such a grip in his jaw and his hands that he had cracked nuts with his teeth ever since he was five years old, and could throw any man in the market town.

The stranger's eyes twinkled with amusement at the old woman's simple-hearted bragging, but he soon seemed to lose interest in it, said he began to feel sleepy, and would talk again with her about her son in the morning. So Ludwig came to show him the way to the sleeping-loft, and it was not long before the little hut was as silent as one of the trees of the forest in which it stood.

In the morning Hunta sent Ludwig up as usual to go through the formality of calling the guest. He had been gone only a few minutes, when she heard the shrill, terrible cries he always made when he was frightened. She clambered hastily up the ladder, and found Ludwig wild-eyed, and trembling from head to foot. He pointed with horror, first at the fringe of red beard and wig of lanky hair that now lay on the floor, and then at the dead man extended lifeless on the cot. Hunta saw at a glance the close-cropped curly hair, the powerful jaw, and handsome, good-natured mouth, and threw herself upon the body with a heart-broken cry of anguish. *She had killed her own son!*

ROGER CATRON'S FRIEND

BY BRET HARTE

Although the author, by sheer force of ability, compels us to expend some sympathy on the hero of this tale, we cannot but feel that the outcast's desertion, by wife and friends, is fairly in accordance with his deserts. From Wilkes' Spirit of the Times.

I think that, from the beginning, we all knew how it would end. He had always been so quiet and conventional, although by nature an impulsive man; always so temperate and abstemious, although a man with a quick appreciation of pleasure; always so cautious and practical, although an imaginative man—that when, at last, one by one he loosed these bands, and gave himself up to a life, perhaps not worse than other lives, which the world has accepted as the natural expression of their various owners, we at once decided that the case was a hopeless one. And when one night we picked him up out of the Union Ditch, a begrimed and weather-worn drunkard, a hopeless debtor, a self-confessed spendthrift, and a half-conscious, maudlin imbecile, we knew that the end had come. The wife he had abandoned had in turn deserted him; the woman he had misled had already realized her folly, and left him, with her reproaches; the associates of his reckless life, who had used and abused him, had found him no longer of service or even amusement, and clearly there was nothing left to do but to hand him over to the state, and we took him to the nearest penitential asylum.

Conscious of the Samaritan deed, we went back to our respective wives and told his story. It is only just to say that these sympathetic creatures were more interested in the philanthropy of their respective husbands than in its miserable object. "It was good and kind in you, dear," said loving Mrs. Maston to her spouse, as returning home that night he flung his coat on a chair with an air of fatigued righteousness; "it was like your kind heart to care for that beast; but after he left that good wife of his—that perfect saint—to take up with that awful woman, I think I'd have left him to die in the ditch. Only to think of it, dear, a woman that you wouldn't speak to!" Here Mr. Maston coughed slightly, colored a little, mumbled something about "women not understanding some things," "that men were men," etc., and then went comfortably to sleep, leaving the outcast, happily

oblivious of all things, and especially this criticism, locked up in Hangtown jail.

For the next twelve hours he lay there, apathetic and half-conscious. Recovering from this after a while, he became furious, vengeful, unmanageable; filling the cell and corridor with maledictions of friend and enemy; and again sullen, morose, and watchful. Then he refused food, and did not sleep—pacing his limits with the incessant, feverish tread of a caged tiger. Two physicians, diagnosing his case from the scant facts, pronounced him insane, and he was accordingly transported to Sacramento. But on the way thither he managed to elude the vigilance of his guards, and escaped. The alarm was given, a hue and cry followed him, the best detectives of San Francisco were on the track, and finally recovered his dead body—emaciated and wasted by exhaustion and fever—in the Stanislaus marshes, identified it, and, receiving the reward of \$1,000 offered by his relatives and family, assisted in legally establishing the end we had predicted.

Unfortunately for the moral, the facts were somewhat inconsistent with the theory. A day or two after the remains were discovered and identified, the real body of "Roger Catron, aged fifty-two years, slight, iron-gray hair, and shabby in apparel," as the advertisement read, dragged itself, travel-worn, trembling, and dishevelled, up the steep slope of Deadwood Hill. How he should do it, he had long since determined—ever since he had hidden his derringer, a mere baby pistol, from the vigilance of his keepers. Where he should do it, he had settled within his mind only within the last few moments. Deadwood Hill was seldom frequented; his body might lie there for months before it was discovered. He had once thought of the river, but he remembered it had an ugly way of exposing its secrets on sand-bar and shallow, and that the body of Whiskey Jim, bloated and disfigured almost beyond recognition, had been once delivered to the eyes of Sandy Bar, before breakfast, on the left bank of the Stanislaus. He toiled up through the chemisal, that clothed the southern slope of the hill, until he reached the bald, storm-scarred cap of the mountain, ironically decked with the picked, featherless plumes of a few dying pines. One stripped of all but two lateral branches, brought a recollection to his fevered brain. Against a background of dull sunset fire, it extended two gaunt arms—black, rigid, and pathetic. Calvary!

With the very word upon his lips, he threw himself, face downward, on the ground beneath it, and, with his fingers clutched in the soil, lay there for some moments, silent and still. In this attitude, albeit a sceptic and unorthodox man, he prayed. I cannot say—indeed I *dare* not say, that his prayer was heard, or that God visited him thus. Let us rather hope that all there was of God in him, in this critical moment of agony and shame, strove outward and upward. Howbeit, when the moon rose, he rose too—perhaps a trifle less steady than the planet, and began to descend the hill with feverish haste, yet with this marked difference between his present haste and his former recklessness: that it seemed to have a well-defined purpose. When he reached the road again, he struck into a well-worn trail, where, in the distance, a light faintly twinkled. Following this beacon, he kept on, and at last flung himself against the door of the little cabin from whose window the light had shone. As he did so, it opened upon the figure of a square, thick-set man, who, in the impetuosity of Catron's onset, received him in his arms.

"Captain Dick," said Roger Catron hoarsely, "Captain Dick, save me! For God's sake, save me!"

Captain Dick, without a word, placed a large, protecting hand upon Catron's shoulder, allowed it to slip to his waist, and then drew his visitor quietly, but firmly, within the cabin. Yet, in the very movement, he had managed to gently and unobtrusively possess himself of Catron's pistol.

"Save ye! From which?" asked Captain Dick, as quietly and unobtrusively dropping the derringer in a flour sack.

"From everything," gasped Catron, "from the men that are hounding me, from my family, from my friends—but most of all—from, from—myself."

He had, in turn, grasped Captain Dick and forced him frenziedly against the wall. The captain released himself, and, taking the hands of his excited visitor, said slowly:

"Ye want some blue mass—suthin' to onload your liver. I'll get it up for ye."

"But, Captain Dick—I'm an outcast, shamed, disgraced——"

"Two o' them pills taken now, and two in the morning," continued the captain, gravely, rolling a bolus in his fingers, "will bring yer head to the wind ag'in. Yer fallin' to leeward all the time, and ye want to brace up."

"But, captain," continued the agonized man, again clutching the sinewy arms of his host, and forcing his livid face and fixed eyes within a few inches of Captain Dick's, "hear me! You must and shall hear me. I've been in jail—do you hear?—in jail—like a common felon. I've been sent to the asylum like a demented pauper. I've——"

"Two now, and two in the morning," continued the captain, quietly releasing one hand only to place two enormous pills in the mouth of the excited Catron; "thar now—a drink o' whiskey—thar, that'll do—just enough to take the taste out of yer mouth, wash it down, and belay it, so to speak. And how are the mills running, gin'rally, over at the Bar?"

"Captain Dick, hear me—if you *are* my friend, for God's sake, hear me! An hour ago I should have been a dead man——"

"They say that Sam Bolin hez sold out of the Excelsior——"

"Captain Dick! listen, for God's sake; I have suffered——"

But Captain Dick was engaged in critically examining his man. "I guess I'll ladle ye out some o' that soothin'-mixture I bought down at Simpson's 'tother day," he said, reflectively. "And I onderstand the boys up on the Bar think the rains will set in airly."

But here nature was omnipotent. Worn out by exhaustion, excitement, and fever, and possibly a little affected by Captain Dick's later potion, Roger Catron turned white, and lapsed against the wall. In an instant Captain Dick had caught him, as a child, lifted him in his stalwart arms, wrapped a blanket around him, and deposited him in his bunk. Yet, even in his prostration, Catron made one despairing appeal for mental sympathy from his host.

"I know I'm sick—dying, perhaps," he gasped, from under the blankets, "but promise me, whatever comes, tell my wife—say to——"

"It has been lookin' consid'ble like rain lately, hereabouts," continued the captain, coolly, in a kind of amphibious slang, characteristic of the man; "but in these yer latitudes no man kin set up to be a weather sharp."

"Captain! will you hear me?"

"Yer goin' to sleep, now," said the captain, potentially.

"But, captain, they are pursuing me! If they should track me here——"

"Thar is a rifle over thar, and yer's my navy revolver. When I've emptied them, and want you to bear a hand, I'll call ye. Just now your lay is to turn in. It's my watch."

There was something so positive, strong, assuring, and a little awesome in the captain's manner that the trembling, nervously prostrated man beneath the blankets forbore to question further. In a few moments his breathing, albeit hurried and irregular, announced that he slept. The captain then arose, for a moment critically examined the sleeping man, holding his head a little on one side, whistling softly, and stepping backward to get a good perspective, but always with contemplative good humor, as if Catron were a work of art which he (the captain) had created, yet one that he was not entirely satisfied with. Then he put a large pea-jacket over his flannel blouse, dragged a Mexican *serape* from the corner, and, putting it over his shoulders, opened the cabin door, sat down on the door-step, and leaning back against the door-post, composed himself to meditation.

The moon lifted herself slowly over the crest of Deadwood Hill, and looked down, not unkindly, on his broad, white, shaven face, round and smooth as her own disc, encircled with a thin fringe of white hair and whiskers. Indeed, he looked so like the prevailing caricatures in comic almanacs of planets, with dimly outlined features, that the moon would have been quite justified in flirting with him, as she clearly did, insinuating a twinkle into his keen gray eyes, making the shadow of a dimple on his broad fat chin, and otherwise idealizing him after the fashion of her hero-worshipping sex.

Touched by these benign influences, Captain Dick presently broke forth in melody. His song was various, but chiefly, I think, confined to the recital of the exploits of one Lorenzo, who, as related by himself—

"Shipped on board of a liner,
'Renzo, boys, 'Renzo,"

a fact that seemed to have deprived him at once of all metre, grammar, or even the power of coherent narration. At times a groan or a half-articulate cry would come from the bunk whereon Roger Catron lay, a circumstance that always seemed to excite Captain Dick to greater effort, and more rapid vocalization. Toward morning, in the midst of a prolonged howl from the captain, who was finishing "The Starboard

Watch, Ahoy!" in three different keys, Roger Catron's voice broke suddenly and sharply from his enwrappings:

"Dry up, you d—d old fool—will you?"

Captain Dick stopped instantly. Rising to his feet, and looking over the landscape, he took all nature into his confidence in one inconceivably arch and crafty wink.

"He's coming up to the wind," he said softly, rubbing his hands. "The pills is fetchin' him. Steady now, boys, steady. Steady as she goes on her course." And with another wink of ineffable wisdom, he entered and locked the door.

Meanwhile the best society of Sandy Bar was kind to the newly made widow. Without being definitely expressed, it was generally felt that sympathy with her was now safe, and carried no moral responsibility with it. Even practical and pecuniary aid, which before had been withheld, lest it should be diverted from its proper intent, and perhaps, through the weakness of the wife, made minister to the wickedness of the husband—even that was now openly suggested. Everybody felt that somebody should do something for the widow. A few did it. Her own sex rallied to her side, generally with large sympathy, but, unfortunately, small pecuniary or practical result. At last, when the feasibility of her taking a boarding-house in San Francisco, and identifying herself with that large class of American gentlewomen who have seen better days, but clearly are on the road never to see them again, was suggested, a few of her own and her husband's rich relatives came to the front to rehabilitate her. It was easier to take her into their homes, as an equal, than to refuse to call upon her as the mistress of a lodging-house in the adjoining street. And, upon inspection, it was found that she was still quite an eligible *partie*, prepossessing, and withal in her widow's weeds a kind of poetical and sentimental presence, as necessary in a wealthy and fashionable American family as a work of art. "Yes, poor Caroline has had a sad, sad history," the languid Mrs. Walker Catron would say, "and we all sympathize with her deeply; she is my husband's favorite sister." What this dark history was never came out, but its very mystery always thrilled the visitor, and seemed to indicate plainly the respectability of the hostess. Nor was it altogether unnatural that presently Mrs. Roger Catron lent herself to this sentimental deception, and began to think

that she really was a more exquisitely aggrieved woman than she had imagined. Indeed, one or two impulsive gentlemen openly regretted that the deceased had not been hanged, to which Mrs. Walker Catron responded that, "Thank Heaven, they were spared at least that disgrace," and so sent conviction into the minds of her hearers.

It was scarcely two months after this painful close of her matrimonial life that, one rainy February morning the servant brought a card to Mrs. Roger Catron, bearing the following inscription:

"Richard Graeme Macleod."

Women are more readily affected by names than we are, and there was a certain Highland respectability about this that, albeit, not knowing its possessor, impelled Mrs. Catron to send word that she "would be down in a few moments." At the end of this femininely indefinite period—a quarter of an hour by the French clock on the mantel-piece—Mrs. Roger Catron made her appearance in the reception-room. It was a dull, wet day, as I have said before, but on the Contra Costa Hills the greens and a few flowers were already showing promise of rejuvenescence and an early spring. There was something of this, I think, in Mrs. Catron's presence, shown, perhaps, in the coquettish bow of a ribbon, in a larger and more delicate ruche, in a tighter belting of her black cashmere gown; but still there was a suggestion of recent rain in the eyes, and threatening weather. As she entered the room, the sun came out too, and revealed the prettiness and delicacy of her figure, and, I regret to state, also the somewhat obtrusive plainness of her visitor.

"I knew ye'd be sorter disapp'inted at first, not gettin' the regular bearings o' my name, but I'm 'Captain Dick.' Mebbe ye've heard your husband—that is, your husband ez was—Roger Catron, speak o' me?"

Mrs. Catron, feeling herself outraged and deceived in belt, ruche, and ribbon, freezingly admitted that she had heard of him before.

"In course," said the captain; "why, Lord love ye, Mrs. Catron—ez woz, he used to be all the time talkin' of ye. And allers in a free, easy, confidential way. Why, one night—don't ye remember?—when he came home carrying more canvas than was seamanlike, and you shet him out the house,

and laid for him with a broomstick or one o' them crokay mallets, I disremember which, and he kem over to me, Ole Captain Dick, and I sez to him, sez I, 'Why, Roger, them only love-pats, and yer condishun is such ez to make any woman mad-like.' Why, Lord bless ye! there ain't enny of them mootool differences you and him hed ez I doesn't knows on, and didn't always stand by, and lend ye a hand, and heave in a word or two of advice when called on."

Mrs. Catron, ice everywhere but in her pink cheeks, was glad that Mr. Catron seemed to always a friend to whom he confided *everything*, even the base falsehoods he had invented.

"Mebbe now they *woz* falsehoods," said the captain, thoughtfully. "But don't ye go think," he added conscientiously, "that he kept on that tack all the time. Why, that day he made a raise, gambling, I think, over at Dutch Flat, and give ye them bracelets—regular solid gold—why, it would have done yer heart good to hear him talk about you—said you had the prettiest arm in Californy. Well," said the captain, looking around for a suitable climax; "well, you'd have thought that he was sorter proud of ye! Why, I woz with him in 'Frisco when he bought that A1 prize bonnet for ye for seventy-five dollars, and, not hevin' over fifty dollars in his pocket, borried the other twenty-five dollars outer me. Mebbe it was a little fancy for a bonnet, but I allers thought he took it a leetle too much to heart when you swopped it off for that Dollar Varden dress, just because that lawyer Maxwell said the Dollar Vardens was becomin' to ye. Ye know, I reckon he was always sorter jealous of that there shark——"

"May I venture to ask what your business is with me?" interrupted Mrs. Catron sharply.

"In course," said the captain, rising. "Ye see," he said, apologetically, "we got to talking o' Roger and ole times, and I get a little out o' my course. It's a matter of——" he began to fumble in his pockets, and finally produced a small memorandum-book, which he glanced over, "it's a matter of two hundred and fifty dollars."

"I don't understand you," said Mrs. Catron, in indignant astonishment.

"On the 15th of July," said the captain, consulting his memorandum-book, "Roger sold his claim at Ny's Ford for \$1,500. Now, let's see. Thar was nigh on \$350, ez he ad-

mitted to me, he lost at poker, and we'll add \$50 to that for treating, suppers, and drinks, gin'rally—put Roger down for \$400. Then there was *you*. Now, you spent \$250 on your trip to 'Frisco thet summer; then \$200 went for them presents you sent your Aunt Jane, and thar was \$400 for house expenses. Well, thet foots up \$1,250. Now, what's become of thet other \$250?"

Mrs. Catron's woman's impulse to retaliate sharply overcame her first natural indignation at her visitor's impudence. Therein she lost, woman-like, her ground of vantage.

"Perhaps the woman he fled with can tell you," she said savagely.

"Thet," said the captain slowly, "is a good—a reasonable idee. But it ain't true; from all I can gather, *she* lent *him* money. It didn't go *thar*."

"Roger Catron left me penniless," said Mrs. Catron hotly.

"Thet's jist what gits me. You oughter have \$250 some-whar, lying round."

Mrs. Catron saw her error. "May I ask what right you have to question me? If you have any, I must refer you to my lawyer or my brother-in-law; if you have none, I hope you will not oblige me to call the servants to put you from the house."

"Thet sounds reasonable and square, too," said the captain, thoughtfully; "I've a power of attorney from Roger Catron to settle up his affairs and pay his debts, given a week afore them detectives handed ye over his dead body. But I thought you and me might save lawyers' fees, and all fuss and feathers, ef, in a sociable, sadlike way—lookin' back sorter on Roger ez you and me once knew him—we hed a quiet talk together."

"Good-morning, sir," said Mrs. Catron, rising stiffly.

The captain hesitated a moment, a slight flush of color came into his face as he at last rose as the lady backed out of the room. "Good-morning, ma'am," said the captain, and departed.

Very little was known of this interview, except the general impression in the family that Mrs. Catron had successfully resisted a vague attempt at blackmail from one of her husband's former dissolute companions. Yet, it is only fair to say that Mrs. C. snapped up, quite savagely, two male sympathizers on this subject, and cried a good deal for two days

afterward, and once, in the hearing of her sister-in-law, to that lady's great horror, "wished she was dead."

A week after this interview, as Lawyer Phillips sat in his office, he was visited by Macleod. Recognizing, possibly, some practical difference between the widow and the lawyer, Captain Dick this time first produced his credentials—a "power of attorney." "I need not tell you," said Phillips, "that the death of your principal renders this instrument invalid, and I suppose you know that, leaving no will and no property, his estate has not been administered upon."

"Mebbe it is and mebbe it isn't. But I hain't askin' for anything but information. There was a bit o' prop'ty, and a mill on to it, over at Heavytrees, ez sold for \$10,000. I don't see," said the captain, consulting his memorandum-book, "ez *he* got anything out of it."

"It was mortgaged for \$7,000," said the lawyer quickly, "and the interest and fees amount to about \$3,000 more."

"The mortgage was given as security for a note?"

"Yes, a gambling debt," said the lawyer, sharply.

"That's so, and my belief ez that it wasn't a square game. He shouldn't hev given no note. Why, don't ye mind, 'way back in '60, when you and me was in Marysville, that night you bucked ag'in' faro, and lost seving hundred dollars, and then refoosed to tek up your checks, saying it was a fraud and a gambling debt? And don't ye mind, when that chap kicked ye, and I helped to drag him off ye—and——"

"I'm busy now, Mr. Macleod," said Phillips hastily, "my clerk will give you all the information you require. Good-morning."

"It's mighty queer," said the captain thoughtfully, as he descended the stairs; "but the moment the talk gets limber and sociable-like, and I gets to running free, under easy sail, it's always 'Good-morning, captain,' and we're becalmed."

By some occult influence, however, all the foregoing conversation, slightly exaggerated, and the whole interview of the captain with the widow, with sundry additions, became the common property of Sandy Bar, to the great delight of the boys. There was scarcely a person who had ever had business or social relations with Roger Catron, whom "The Frozen Truth," as Sandy Bar delighted to designate the captain, had not "interviewed" as simply and directly. The natural result of this was a singular reaction in favor of the

late Roger Catron in the public sentiment of Sandy Bar—so strong, indeed, as to induce the Rev. Mr. Joshua McSnagley, the next Sunday, to point somewhat harshly the moral of Catron's life. After the service, he was approached in the vestibule, and in the hearing of some of his audience, by Captain Dick, with the following compliment: "In many p'int's ye hed jess got Roger Catron down to a hair. I knew ye'd do it; why, Lord love ye, you and him had p'int's in common, and when he giv' ye that hundred dollars, arter the fire in Sacramento, to help ye rebuild the parsonage, he sez to me—me not likin' ye on account o' my being on the committee that invited ye to resign from Marysville, all along o' that affair with Deacon Pursell's darter; and a piece she was, parson! eh?—well, Roger, he ups and sez to me: 'Every man hez his faults,' sez he; and sez he, 'there's no reason why parson ain't a human being like us, and that gal o' Pursell's is pizen, ez I know.' So, ye see, I seed that ye was hittin' yourself over Catron's shoulder, like them early martyrs." But here, as Captain Dick was clearly blocking up all egress from the church, the sexton obliged him to move on, and again he was stopped in his conversational career.

But only for a time. Before long, it was whispered that Captain Dick had ordered a meeting of the creditors, debtors, and friends of Roger Catron at Robinson's Hall. It was suggested, with some show of reason, that this had been done at the instigation of various practical jokers of Sandy Bar, who had imposed on the simple directness of the captain, and the attendance that night certainly indicated something more than a mere business meeting. All of Sandy Bar crowded into Robinson's Hall, and, long before Captain Dick made his appearance on the platform, with his inevitable memorandum-book, every inch of floor was crowded.

The captain began to read the expenditures of Roger Catron with relentless fidelity of detail. The several losses by poker, the whiskey bills, and the record of a "jamboree" at Tooley's, the vague expenses whereof footed up \$275, were received with enthusiastic cheers by the audience. A single milliner's bill for \$125 was hailed with delight; \$100 expended in treating the Vestal Virgin Combination Troupe almost canonized his memory; \$50 for a simple buggy ride with Deacon Fisk brought down the house; \$500 advanced, without security, and unpaid, for the electioneering expenses

of Assemblyman Jones, who had recently introduced a bill to prevent gambling, and the sale of lager beer on Sundays, was received with an ominous groan. One or two items of money loaned caused the withdrawal of several gentlemen from the audience, amidst hisses or ironical cheers.

At last Captain Dick advanced to the footlights.

"Gentlemen and friends," he said slowly, "I foots up \$25,000 as Roger Catron hez *made*, fair and square, in this yer country. I foots up \$27,000 ez he has *spent* in this yer country. I puts it to you ez men—fa'r-minded men—ef this man was a pauper and debtor? I put it to you, ez fa'r-minded men—ez free and easy men—ez political economists—ez this the kind of men to impoverish a county?"

An overwhelming and instantaneous "No!" almost drowned the last utterance of the speaker.

"Thar is only one item," said Captain Dick slowly, "only one item thet, ez men—ez fa'r-minded men—ez political economists, it seems to me we hez the right to question. It's this: Thar is an item, read to you by me, of \$2,000 paid to certing San Francisco detectives, paid out o' the assêts o' Roger Catron, for the finding of Roger Catron's body. Gentlemen of Sandy Bar, and friends, *I* found that body, and yer it is!"

And Roger Catron, a little pale and nervous, but palpably in the flesh, stepped upon the platform.

Of course the newspapers were full of it the next day. Of course in due time it appeared as a garbled and romantic item in the San Francisco press. Of course Mrs. Catron, on reading it, fainted, and for two days said that this last, cruel blow ended all relations between her husband and herself. On the third day she expressed her belief that, if he had had the slightest feeling for her, he would long since, for the sake of mere decency, have communicated with her. On the fourth day she thought she had been, perhaps, badly advised, had an open quarrel with her relatives, and intimated that a wife had certain obligations, etc. On the sixth day, still not hearing from him, she quoted Scripture, spoke of a seventy-times-seven forgiveness, and went generally into mild hysterics. On the seventh, she left in the train for Sandy Bar.

And really, I don't know that I have anything more to tell. I dined with them recently, and, upon my word, a more decorous, conventional, and dull dinner I never ate in my life.

SIMPLICITY

BY EMILE ZOLA

To those who know Zola's work only by his studies in realism, this charming fairy tale should be a great and pleasing surprise—written as it is with the utmost purity and all the imaginative insight of a true lover of the retiring beauties and shy voices of a mighty forest. Translated from the French by Emily Marion Oppen, for Short Stories.

Once upon a time, on an island, which the sea has long since engulfed, there lived a king and a queen who had one son. The king was a great king; his drinking-cup was the very largest in all the realm; his sword the heaviest; he fought and he drank royally.

The queen was a beautiful queen; she had so many wonderful cosmetics, and they wrought so mysterious and wonderful a charm, that she looked not a day older than forty!

The son was a fool! "A fool of the most pronounced type," said the brilliant lights of the kingdom. When he had reached the age of sixteen, the king, his father, took him to the wars. These wars were carried on in order to exterminate a certain neighboring nation, that dared to possess too much territory.

Here it was that Simplicity showed himself a dunce. He saved twenty-four women and thirty-six children from slaughter; and every stroke of the sword which he was himself forced to give caused him to weep bitterly—while the battlefield itself, running over with blood and encumbered with the dead, filled his heart with such deep pity that for three days he could not eat.

So you must see that he was a dunce, my dear.

When he was seventeen he was obliged to assist at a great festival, given by the king to all the magnates of his kingdom. Here, again, he committed many blunders. He contented himself easily; he ate sparsely of the great banquet spread before him, and he swore—not at all! His glass would have remained always full before him, had not the king himself, to save the dignity of the family, emptied it slyly from time to time.

At eighteen, as he began to grow a beard, he was noticed by one of the queen's court ladies.

Court ladies are dreadful creatures, my dear.

This particular court lady wished for nothing less than to

he kissed by the prince! The poor boy did not dream of such a thing; he trembled when she spoke to him, and hid himself the moment he saw the edge of her skirts in the gardens. The king, who was a good father, saw what was passing, and laughed in his sleeve. But as the lady still pursued the prince, and the kiss was still withheld, he blushed for such a son, and himself gave the kiss asked for, always, to be sure, for the dignity and honor of his family and his race. "Oh, the little fool!" said the king, who was a man of spirit!

It was at the age of twenty that Simplicity became completely idiotic. He met a Forest and fell in love! In those olden times, people did not try to beautify the trees by pruning and cruel incisions. The branches grew as they listed; God alone had them in charge, and moderated the roots and managed the saplings. Simplicity's forest was an immense nest of verdure, interspersed here and there by majestic avenues. The moss, drunk with the dew, flourished wantonly; the eglantines spread their pliant arms, sought each other, and played mad pranks around the mighty trunks of the trees. The great trees themselves, standing calm and serene, twisted their roots in the shade, and mounted tumultuously upward, to kiss the rays of summer. The green grass flourished; while, in their hurry to blossom, the daisy and the scorpion-grass, growing confused at times, clung together on the broken trunks of fallen trees. And all these branches, all these grasses, all these flowers, sang; all mingled and pressed closely together, to gossip more at ease, to whisper low together of the loves of the corolla. A breath of life floated low down in the shadowed coppice, giving voice to each sprig of moss.

The forest held high carnival. The lady-birds, the beetles, the dragon-flies, the butterflies—all the beautiful lovers of the flowering hedges—had gathered at the four quarters of the forest.

There they established their little republic; the foot-paths were their guards; the streams, their streams; the forest, their forest. They lived luxuriously at the foot of the trees, on low branches, in the dried leaves; lived there as though at home, quietly and by right of conquest. They had, like good citizens, abandoned the higher branches to the robins and the nightingales. The forest, that had hitherto sung in

all its branches, in all its leaves and flowers, sang now with the insects and with the birds.

In a short time Simplicity became an old friend of the forest. They chatted so happily together that it robbed him of the last vestige of sense. When he left the forest, to shut himself again within four walls, whether seated at his table, or lying in his bed, he was always dreaming.

At last, one beautiful morning, he suddenly abandoned his apartments, and went and installed himself under the old foliage. There he chose for himself an immense palace. His *salon* was a vast glade. Long dark green draperies ornamented the periphery; five hundred flexible pillars, interlaced like a fine gauzy veil, and of the bright hue of the emerald, towered high in the air. The roof itself was one large dome of changeable blue satin, starred with golden nails. His sleeping-room was a delicious boudoir, filled with mystery and fragrance. The flooring and the walls were hidden under a soft carpet of an inimitable pattern. The alcove, bored through a rock by some giant, had walls of pink marble, and a floor of ruby powder. He had also his bathroom, a living fountain of pure water, a crystal bath, lost in a bouquet of flowers. I will not tell of the thousand galleries which crossed each other in this palace, nor of the wondrous landscapes, nor of the gardens. It was one of those royal habitations that God alone knows how to fashion. The prince, therefore, could now be as foolish as he pleased. His father thought him changed into a wolf, and so sought another heir, more worthy of the throne.

Simplicity was very busy during the next few days, after settling himself in his new home. He made friends with his neighbors, the beetles and the butterflies; they were kind neighbors, with as much bright intelligence as man. At first he had some difficulty in understanding their language, and he soon perceived that he would have to educate himself anew. He learned the concise language of the insects. A sound indicated a hundred different objects, following the inflection of the voice and the length of the note. Soon he lost the habit of speaking the language of his race, so poor in spite of its wealth of words. The way of living of his new friends charmed him. He felt supremely ignorant, compared with them, and resolved to go and study at their schools.

He was more reserved in his relations toward the mosses and the pines. As he was not yet able to understand the language of the blade of grass and of the flowers, his ignorance caused a certain reserve in his intercourse with them. But the forest did not eye him coldly. It understood that he was a simple soul, and that he held the most amiable intercourse with the denizens of the wood. No one hid from him. It often chanced that he would surprise, at the end of a glade, a butterfly ruffling the collar of a daisy. Soon the hawthorn overcame her bashfulness, just enough to give lessons to the young prince. She lovingly taught him the language of perfume and of color. The purple corolla hailed Simplicity on his awakening; the green leaves told of their wild midnight dances; the grasshopper confided to him in a whisper that he was madly in love with the violet.

Simplicity had chosen for his bosom friend a golden dragon-fly, with a slender waist and quivering wings. This beauty was a dreadful coquette; she sported near him, seemed to call to him, then flew lightly from his hand. The great trees, who saw these manœuvres, rebuked her vigorously and solemnly whispered that she would come to a bad end.

Simplicity suddenly became restless. The lady-bug, who was the first to perceive the sadness of her friend, gently sought to win his confidence. He answered sadly that he was as happy as ever. He rose now with the dawn, and wandered through the glade until dusk. He softly held back the branches, searched the thicket and the shadows formed by the leaves.

"What is our pupil seeking?" demanded the hawthorn of the moss.

The dragon-fly, wondering at this desertion of her lover, concluded that he was mad for love of her. She came and roguishly fluttered about him; he did not perceive her. The big trees had judged her rightly; she consoled herself quickly with the first butterfly at the crossway.

The leaves were sad as they watched the young prince, questioning each tuft of grass and searching with an eager eye the long avenues. They heard him complain of the impenetrable thickness of the brushwood, and they said, "Simplicity has seen Flower-of-the-Water," the Undine of the spring.

Flower-of-the-Water was the child of a sunbeam and a dewdrop.

She was so limpidly beautiful that the kiss of a lover would cause her death. The perfume of her breath was so sweet that a kiss from her lips would cause the death of her lover. The forest knew this, and with jealous care it hid its adored child. It had given her as a sanctuary a spring shaded by a thick cluster of trees. There, in the silence and the shadow, Flower-of-the-Water glittered in the midst of her sisters. Idly she floated with the tide, her small feet half hid by the ripples, her golden head crowned with liquid pearls. Her smile was the delight of the water-lilies and the gladioles. She was the soul of the forest. She lived without a care, knowing nought of earth but her mother, the dew, nor of the heavens, but the sunbeam, her father. She knew herself beloved by the ripple that cradled her, by the branch that shaded her. She had a thousand wooers, but not one lover. Flower-of-the-Water was not ignorant of the fact that she would die of love; she was pleased with the thought, and lived in the hope of such a death. Smilingly she awaited the well-beloved.

One night, by the light of the stars, Simplicity beheld her, at the winding of a glade. He sought her during a long month, hoping to meet her behind every tree-trunk. Sometimes it seemed to him that he saw her gliding through the coppice; but he found only the great shadows of the poplars, swayed by the winds of heaven.

The forest became silent now; it mistrusted Simplicity. It pressed low its leaves, and threw dark shadows of night on the young prince's path. The danger that threatened Flower-of-the-Water made it melancholy; it gave no more soft caresses, no more loving prattle.

Undine came again to the glade, and once more Simplicity beheld her. Wild with longing, he pursued her. The child, mounted on a moonbeam, did not hear the sound of his footsteps. She flew onward, light as a feather floating in the wind. Simplicity ran but could not overtake her. He wept bitterly—despair filled his soul; but still he pressed onward, while the forest watched with growing anxiety this insensate race. The bushes barred his way; the thorns held him in their sharp embrace, grimly arresting his progress—the entire forest was in arms to defend its child. Still he kept on, though

the moss grew treacherous and slippery beneath his feet. The branches interlaced more firmly and faced him, immovable as a wall; fallen trunks of trees threw themselves in his path; the rocks rolled down of their own volition and strove to entrap him; the insects nipped his heels; the butterflies, brushing his eyelids with their wings, blinded him.

Flower-of-the-Water, neither seeing nor hearing him, still flew onward. Simplicity, with anguish, felt that the moment was approaching when she would again vanish; and, desperate, breathless, he dashed on.

He heard the old oaks call angrily after him: "Why did you not tell us that you were a man? We would have hidden away from you; we would have refused to teach you, so that your shadowed eyes would have failed to see Flower-of-the-Water, the Undine of the spring. You came to us with seeming innocence, the innocence of the dumb animals; and now to-day you show us the spirit of man. Look, you are crushing the beetles, you tear our leaves, you break our branches; the spirit of selfishness is sweeping you away—you would steal our very soul!" And the hawthorn added: "Simplicity, pause in pity! If Flower-of-the-Water should desire to breathe the perfume of my starry blossoms, why not leave them to grow freely on my branches?" And the moss said: "Stay, Simplicity, come dream on the velvet of my fragrant carpet. In the distance among the trees, thou canst see Flower-of-the-Water playing; thou shalt see her bathe in the spring, and casting glistening pearls around her throat; thou canst share the joy of her glances; stay with us, thou shalt live and see her." And the whole forest cried: "Stay, Simplicity! a kiss will kill thee—do not give that kiss! Dost thou not know? The evening breeze, our messenger, has he not told thee? Flower-of-the-Water is the celestial flower, whose perfume is death. Alas! poor child, her destiny is a strange one! Have mercy, Simplicity, do not drink her soul on her lips!"

Flower-of-the-Water turned and saw Simplicity; she smiled and beckoned him to draw near, as she said to the forest, "Here comes my well-beloved!"

Three days three hours three minutes had the prince pursued her; the words of the oaks still rumbled around him—he felt half tempted to turn and flee. Flower-of-the-Water already clasped his hands; she tip-toed on her tiny feet; her smile was reflected in the young man's eyes.

"Thou didst long delay," murmured she. "My heart recognized thee in the forest; I climbed on a moonbeam and I sought thee—three days—three hours—three minutes!"

Simplicity was silent, scarcely daring to breathe; she bade him sit by her on the brink of the fountain; she caressed him with her glances, and he! long time did he gaze!

"Dost thou not recognize me?" whispered she. "I have often seen thee in my dreams; I went to thee—thou didst take my hand, then together we would walk silent and trembling. Didst *thou* not see me? Dost thou not remember thy dreams?" and as at last he found voice to speak: "Do not say anything," she interrupted quickly. "I am Flower-of-the-Water, and thou art my well-beloved! We shall die!"

The great trees bent forward the better to behold the young lovers; they trembled with anguish and whispered each other that the souls of the lovers would soon fly away! All the voices grew hushed. The blade of grass and the oak were overcome with pity; the leaves had forgotten their anger; Simplicity, the lover of Flower-of-the-Water, was now the son of the forest.

She rested her head on his shoulder, and together they gazed into the stream; they smiled into each other's eyes! Again, looking upward, they watched the golden dust that trembled in the rays of the setting sun. Slowly their arms entwined—slowly—slowly. They awaited the coming of the evening star, when they would blend together and fly away forever!

Not one single word ruffled the harmony of their ecstasy. Their souls, breathing through their lips, mingled together.

The day faded; the lips of the lovers grew ever nearer. A terrible anguish held the forest motionless and rigid. Huge rocks, from which the water sprang, threw heavy shadows around them, they alone were radiant in the growing night!

At last the star appeared in the blue above, and their lips met in the supreme kiss; and through the oaks there quivered a long sob—their lips had met, and their souls took wing!

On the edge of the stream they found Simplicity, smiling, in the sleep of death. His feet dipped in the ripples, his head reposed on the grassy bank. Closely pressed to his lips was a small pink and white blossom, daintily exquisite and of a penetrating perfume.

ETCHING: SOON SING

BY HARRIET J. WHITNEY

Blind devotion led him on ; but that, unhappily, proved insufficient to carry the frightened and unnerved heathen safely on his errand of mercy.

Soon Sing was no *vaquero*; but this Chinaman, cook at the ranch, was a gentle heathen; and when one day a fluffy bundle was placed in his arms, he christened the tiny stranger "Lilly Missee." Now he was told to ride with the news of her illness, and love spurred his courage to the sticking-point.

"Keep above the ripple, and for God's sake ride fast!"

Soon Sing looked at the big roan and his knees smote together; but though the flesh was exceedingly weak, the spirit was willing, and he clambered into the saddle.

"Give him his head, and he'll carry you straight to camp; only strike the ford above the ripple. And Sing, if I don't have help before night, Lilly Missee will die!"

One mile—two—five! And the roan was on a keen run. His foam-flecked breast and quivering flanks showed that he was well down to the best there was in him. Sing's face had blanched to a pale straw-color, and the veins stood out on the yellow hand which grasped the pommel, but he made no effort to slacken speed, and they swept down to the Shoshonie, which was rushing, bank-full, swollen by the snow-fed mountain streams. With a prayer to the God that guards little white babies, Sing jammed the letter hard beneath one of the big silver conchoes; and then he was in mid-stream, clinging wildly to the bridle, and dragging the horse's head down—till he missed his footing and plunged below the ripple, into swimming water. Still, no danger impended, save for that deadly grip on the heavy curb. It held the brave roan's nose under water, and in the fierce struggle for breath he threw himself up, up, until he fell backward, and poor Soon Sing was swept to a watery grave, far from that Flowery Kingdom where every good Celestial fondly hopes at last to find a resting-place.

An hour later, a riderless horse galloped into the round-up camp, and Tom Grandin took from its bridle the water-soaked missive which told him of his child's danger.

"I send Sing," it said, "for there is no one else. Heaven help him to make the ford and save my baby!"

THREE IN CHARGE

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL

According to an Irish adage, there is safety in numbers ; but an exception must seemingly be noted against a multiplicity of captains. How they succeeded in plumping the ship *Biddy McDougal* on the coast of Africa, is entertainingly told in this story. Copyright, 1891, by the Authors' Alliance.

It is an episode of ocean life now a good many years old ; but human nature was the same then as it is now ; and, indeed, the older I grow, the more I find human nature the same now as it was then.

Business had carried me to the East Indies. I had visited Madras, whence I had proceeded to Calcutta, and from Calcutta I had made my way to Rangoon. I stayed in that place a month, by which time my health had suffered so greatly from the climate that I made up my mind to return to Europe in a sailing ship, that I might spend many long weeks among the fresh breezes of the sea, and get all the benefit I could get out of the incessant changes of climate which a voyage down the Indian Ocean, and round the Cape of Good Hope, and up the two Atlantics provides you with.

I heard there was a full-rigged ship lying at Rangoon, called the *Biddy McDougal*, that would suit my convenience, and, as she looked a comfortable, stout ship, I inquired the name of the agent, called upon him, and asked if I could get a passage to England by the vessel. He answered, "Yes," she was bound to London, she was not a passenger ship, but the captain would no doubt be glad to accommodate me with a cabin. The charge would be so much—I forget the figure, but I recollect that it was moderate, something short of forty pounds. For this money I was to live on such provisions as were served up at the captain's table, but the spirits and wine I might need I must myself lay in.

Next day I went aboard the *Biddy McDougal* to inspect her cabin accommodation. On climbing over the gangway, I was received by a tall, rather good-looking man with a face remarkable for its expression of sternness. His skin was blackened by exposure to the sun and weather, and another shade of dye would have qualified him to pass for a native. He frowned as he surveyed me, and inquired my business on board.

"I am going to England in this ship," I said, "and I have come to see what sort of a cabin I am to sleep in."

"Oh, I beg pardon," he exclaimed, but without relaxing his stern expression, "I thought——" He broke off, and muttered behind his teeth.

"Who are you," said I, "the mate?"

"No, sir, I am the captain."

"Oh, indeed," I exclaimed; "pray, what name?"

"Mr. Wilson," he answered. "It is a fashion among merchant seamen who obtain command to style themselves captain. It is a piece of impertinence. The only captains at sea are in the royal navy. A merchant skipper is a master mariner. All merchant captains are misters. I am plain Mr. Wilson, at your service, sir."

He spoke with considerable heat, but I was willing to attribute his temper to the weather, which was certainly very trying. And then, again, his men might have given him trouble, for numerous and deep are the worries and anxieties of the British shipmaster. Much is expected of him, and little is given.

Therefore it was that, when Mr. Wilson spoke with heat about shipmasters styling themselves captains, I made "allowances," as the phrase goes, and, after briefly acquiescing in his views, requested to be allowed to see the cabin the agent had offered me. I viewed that cabin, and found it small and ill-lighted; but on the whole it was a better cabin than I had expected to find on board such a ship as the *Biddy McDougal*. The stateroom in which the meals were taken was a tolerably cheerful interior, very plainly furnished, with a large skylight over the table, a stove for cold weather, a lamp, a clock in the skylight, and a big telescope in the companionway. There were three cabins forward and two cabins abaft. My cabin was forward, on the starboard side.

Mr. Wilson and I went on deck, and we stood conversing awhile under the shelter of an awning. I inquired as to the number of the crew, the time the ship had occupied in making the outward passage, and so on, and then went ashore, understanding that the vessel would not sail for another week.

Three days later I paid a second visit to the ship, for by this time I had purchased what I needed, and I wished to see where the cases and parcels had been stowed. On stepping on board, I beheld an immensely stout, red-faced man with a

wide straw hat on his head, dressed in white drill, seated in a chair, with poles attached to it, under the short awning which sheltered a portion of the quarter-deck. Two or three sailors were lounging in the forepart of the ship. There was no work apparently doing. I looked about me for Mr. Wilson, the master, and, seeing nothing of him, I directed my eyes in search of any individual who might resemble the mate.

"Pray, what's your business?" called out the stout, red-faced man, without attempting to rise.

"I wish to see the captain," said I.

"Well, you are looking at him," he answered.

"I do not see him," I exclaimed, casting my gaze around.

"Why, ye can't be so blind as all that!" cried the stout red-faced man, in a noisy, roaring, yet greasy voice, which he followed on with a succession of hearty chuckles.

"I want to see the captain," said I, feeling much too hot and tired to be made a fool of by a rough, shapeless, red-faced lump of a man such as was he who gazed at me out of a pair of little, weak, moist, blue eyes, set in the midst of a countenance as round and inflamed as the newly risen November moon at its full.

"I am the captain," said he.

"What is your name?" said I, approaching him.

"Captain Timothy Punch," he answered; "what is your business, sir?"

I informed him that I had taken a passage in the *Biddy McDougal* for England.

"Oh, you're the gent!" he cried, and his manner immediately became respectful. "You'll excuse me for not rising. I'm full up, flush to the hatches, with gout, and pain ain't going to improve the manners of a plain sailor. If I'm a bit rough in my speech, you'll excuse me. What can I offer ye, sir?"

"Nothing, I thank you."

"A ship's fok'sle was my college," he continued, giving expression to his enjoyment of the matter of his speech by a succession of oily chuckles, "and I comes from a tough stock, sir. Ye may have heard of the famous Captain John Punch, him as was a terror to all wrongdoers down in the West Indian waters. He couldn't read or write, but he was a captain in the royal navy for all that, as you may ascertain by consulting the Admiralty lists of his day. His not being able

to write was nothen; but his not being able to read was a bit inconvenient now and again; as, for instance, when he was sent away under sealed orders, or when he'd get an official letter marked, 'confidential,' the inside of which he was to keep strictly secret."

He was proceeding, but I cut the garrulous, wheezy old gentleman short.

"I may take it," said I, "that there has been a fresh captain appointed to this ship since I visited her a few days ago?"

"You may take it," he noisily wheezed, "that the captain of this ship is Timothy Punch. He brought the Biddy McDougal out, and he's going to take the Biddy McDougal home."

I viewed him with astonishment, but held my tongue, never doubting that the "Mr. Wilson," whom I had met, and who might have happened to be on board as a guest or as a sightseer when I arrived, had entertained himself at my expense by a deliberate lie.

Captain Punch again apologized for not being able to rise, yet made an effort to stir in his chair for no other purpose, however, that I could see, than to force a groan that sounded like an execration. He told me that my private stock of wine and the other matters I had laid in were safely housed in the berth adjoining mine, a berth that was unoccupied, and was therefore at my service, as well as the cabin I had paid for. Nevertheless, I went below to make sure. In the cabin I found a young fellow cleaning some glasses.

"Are you the steward?" said I.

"I waits upon the captain," he answered.

"The captain?" I exclaimed.

"Captain Punch, sir," said he.

"Then it is all right so far as Punch goes," thought I; "and that fellow Wilson—if I should happen to meet him!"

"Is there a regular steward?" said I.

"I does all the waiting at this here table," answered the young fellow.

On this I told him that I was the passenger, bade him see that my cabin was clean and comfortable and in readiness for me, slipped a few rupees into his hand, and, after looking at my purchases, returned on deck.

The captain told me that the ship would certainly sail on the following Wednesday, at some hour in the afternoon, and bade me be on board not later than nine.

"We ought to ha' got away three weeks ago," he exclaimed. "It's all along of the Rangoon port authorities, as they call themselves; and lucky it is for these here port authorities that Punch ain't no longer the man he was;" and here he looked at his immense gouty fists, then fastened his eyes significantly upon his bloated, seemingly helpless knees.

I sent my baggage to the ship on the Tuesday afternoon, and at nine o'clock on the following morning I repaired on board the Biddy McDougal as she lay in the river of the town. On gaining the deck, I perceived a number of seamen employed upon the ground tackle, and I seemed to catch sight of the man who had called himself "Wilson" and "captain" standing in the ship's head, and gazing down over the bows; but his face was but partially revealed, and the shadow of his wide straw hat darkened and obscured the little of his countenance that was visible. A man stood near the gangway, clothed in blue serge, with a white cover to his naval cap. He was a sullen-looking fellow, with a reel of white beard and whiskers running down his cheeks under his throat, a sour mouth, and a dry twist of face which, rounding into one eye, made it look smaller than the other. As I had not yet met the mate of the ship, I supposed that this man might be that officer, and, approaching him, I said:

"Are you the mate?"

"No," he answered, leisurely bringing his eyes down from aloft, and fastening them upon me. "I am neither the mate nor the man that cooks the *mate*."

"Who are you?" said I, nettled by his brusque manner.

"Who are you, first of all?" he answered.

"I am a passenger going home in the Biddy McDougal."

His manner changed. "I ask your pardon," said he; "I took you to be another gent—some one I don't want to have nothing more to say to. You're amazingly like him, surely."

"Are you the mate?" said I.

"No, siree," he replied, "I am the captain."

I eyed him steadfastly, and then looked round the deck, scarcely knowing as yet but that I had taken my passage aboard a ship full of lunatics.

"The captain!" I cried.

"Ay," he answered, with an emphatic nod, "Captain Parfitt."

"Pray, how many captains does this ship carry?" said I, again looking round the deck in search of any signs of old Captain Punch.

"One only," said he, "and I'm that man."

"I have been aboard this vessel three times," said I, "and on each occasion have met with a new captain. The first time it was Captain Wilson—there he is," I exclaimed, pointing to the fore-castle where the man Wilson who had called himself the master now stood looking toward me, and plainly visible. "Next it was Captain Timothy Punch, a gouty, red-faced man, who sat helpless in a chair on this quarter-deck. And now it is you."

A sour smile curled the man's lips.

"They haven't been quite above-board with you, sir," said he. "The long and short of it's this: Cap'n Punch was in charge during the outward voyage, right enough; but he was took very bad with gout a month afore Rangoon was reached, and the command of the vessel was given to his chief mate, that there gent as you see for'ards. The ship was to sail home in charge of Mr. Wilson; but the port authorities say 'No'—Mr. Wilson don't hold a certificate as master! The ship couldn't be cleared till a proper master was had. I was asked to navigate the vessel home, and here I am. So ye may take it from me that I'm captain, and nobody else."

"Well," said I, "if there's truth in the saying that there's safety in numbers, the passage should be comfortable and speedy," and with that I went below to look after my traps.

The ship sailed an hour later, but it was not until dinner-time that I saw what we were to expect more or less throughout the whole of the long run to England. We were then at sea, the high sun burning over our masthead, a hot breeze blowing over the quarter, and the ship thrusting along under full breasts of canvas and wide overhanging wings of studding-sail. A bell rang to announce dinner, and I quitted the quarter-deck for the cabin. On entering, I found Mr. Wilson seated at the head of the table. Captain Parfitt followed me below, and instantly exclaimed to Mr. Wilson:

"That's my place. You must clear out of that chair, please."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Mr. Wilson. "I am master of this ship by orders of her lawful captain. You are an interloper."

Captain Parfitt turned pale and breathed short.

"I am captain of this ship," said he, "and you are her chief mate. You will go on deck, if you please, and keep a looking out while I eat my dinner."

Mr. Wilson did not offer to move; merely eyed Captain Parfitt with his extraordinarily stern face. Captain Parfitt clenched his fists.

"Gentlemen," said I, "there must be some remedy for this."

"So there is, by God!" roared Parfitt. "It's mutiny. If ye ain't out of that chair in a jiffy I'll clap ye in irons."

"You!" shouted Mr. Wilson, half rising from his seat.

At this moment the door of one of the after-cabins was opened and two stout sailors appeared, bearing the immense shape of Captain Punch in a chair to which poles had been lashed.

"Is dinner ready?" he called out.

"Your chief mate is a mutineer. He refuses to obey my orders," cried Captain Parfitt.

"Up ye get, Wilson; that's my seat," said Captain Punch, taking no notice of Parfitt.

Mr. Wilson at once made way, and the two sailors, broadly grinning, with much pushing and shoving, hove or rather prized old Punch into the chair of honor. Mr. Wilson swiftly seated himself at the foot of the table.

"Sit ye down, sir, sit ye down," cried old Punch to me. "Who's got the lookout on deck?"

"The ship's watching herself," sulkily growled Captain Parfitt.

"Hadn't ye better go up and look after her?" said Punch to Parfitt.

"What am I to understand?" shouted Parfitt.

"Why this," interrupted Captain Punch: "that this is a ship as could well ha' found her way home without ye. Ye wasn't wanted; but since ye've made up your mind to come, why, durn my eyes, ye'll have to take things as ye find 'em. Mr. Wilson's the captain helect by my authority, and, while I've got lungs to blow a breath of air out with, I'm the gorramighty of the Biddy McDougal. Understand that."

Without answering a word, Captain Parfitt flung his cap down upon the locker and took his seat at the table abreast of me. On this Captain Punch bade Mr. Wilson tell the

ship's carpenter—who, it seems, acted as second mate—to keep a lookout until he was relieved from the cabin.

"Seeing that I have paid for my passage aboard this ship, and that it is highly desirable, absolutely essential in a word, that I should have some head to refer to, some person in supreme authority to complain to and to appeal to in case of discomfort or difficulty, I should be glad to know, gentlemen, which of you I am to consider as captain of the Biddy McDougal," said I, hoping by this stilted but nevertheless resolutely uttered address to clear the air somewhat and do some good.

"I am captain," said Punch, with his mouth full of beef.

"Yes, and I am in charge," said Captain Parfitt.

"You mean I am in charge," cried Mr. Wilson.

"I am captain of this ship and the supreme head, sir," cried Punch, addressing me, "but Mr. Wilson represents me while I'm off duty through illness, and so long as he represents me he is master helect, as I aforesaid, and there's no man aboard this ship who's going to say contrary."

"Yes, there is," said Captain Parfitt; "but I don't mean to waste no words on neither of ye. You know where my authority comes from. I'm master of the Biddy McDougal till I've berthed her in the dock she's bound to, and if this here mate of yours interferes with me I'll log him for mutiny, break him, and send him forra'ds, as ye both know I've got the power to do. And if that don't answer——" he interrupted himself by exclaiming, "But I don't want no words," and so saying he rose, having eaten little or nothing, and went on deck.

Well, as may be supposed, this was but the first of a long series of uncomfortable quarrels. I cannot positively say that Captain Parfitt did not log Mr. Wilson for mutiny, and order him forward into the forecastle to work before the mast. This I cannot say, but it is certain that Mr. Wilson did not go forward; on the contrary, he remained very much aft, giving instructions without regard to Captain Parfitt's orders, and acting in all ways as though he, and he alone, were master of the vessel.

That very same day, I remember—I mean that day on which the quarrel at the table happened—Mr. Wilson came on deck while Captain Parfitt was pacing the weather side, keeping a lookout, and with an air of aggression stared into

the compass, then looked aloft, also very aggressively, and then sent his eyes round the sea line, making a motion with his head that was offensive with its suggestion of criticism. Presently, taking his stand abreast of the mizzenmast to leeward, he asked the man at the wheel how the ship's head was. The fellow replied.

"Let her come to three-quarters of a point," called out Mr. Wilson, "and, Captain Parfitt, you will be so good as to trim sail."

"Keep her as she goes!" roared Parfitt.

"You are making too much westing," exclaimed Mr. Wilson.

"Leave the deck, sir," bawled Parfitt.

"By what chart are you sailing, I should like to know?" sneered Mr. Wilson. "Why, damme, man, we aren't bound to Madras."

An angry quarrel followed, a mere affray of words indeed, but it was hard to guess at what instant the blow would not come, with a long and shameful scuffle on top of it. The sailors forward stood staring aft, thoroughly enjoying the spectacle of the two men gesticulating and bawling at each other. Presently, up through the hatch came Captain Punch, borne by a brace of sailors, who struggled up the steep companion's steps with purple faces, panting and blowing, while Punch sat holding on tightly and cursing the builder of the ship for constructing a companionway that gave a man no room to turn in.

"What is it all about?" shouted the old fellow, as his bearers dumped him down upon the deck.

"The ship's being headed for Madras," cried Mr. Wilson, with a contemptuous laugh.

"He's a liar, and he knows he's a liar," said Parfitt.

"You're making too westerly a course to suit me," exclaimed Captain Punch, and he ordered the man at the wheel to shift the helm by a spoke or two.

"D'ye suppose," cried Captain Parfitt, approaching Captain Punch close, and snorting his words into the old seaman's jolly, round, brick-red face, "that I've taken charge of this sugar-box to l'arn navigation from you?"

"I ain't deaf—keep your distance," responded Captain Punch. "This sugar-box is going to get home, and I don't mean to let you put her ashore betwixt this and the London

Docks, and so I tell ye. I've heard of navigators, you must know, whose reckoning by account has landed them by four degrees of longitude inland; same thing may happen with some folk's sextants. My course is your course, and you'll please to stick to it."

"There's not even yet southing enough," said Mr. Wilson.

"Yes, there is," cried Captain Punch; "you don't want to teach me navigation, do 'ee?"

Captain Parfitt rushed into the cabin and returned with a chart, which he laid open on the deck at Captain Punch's feet. He then went down on his knees and indicated the course with a square thumb, occasionally pounding the chart with his fist, until the deck echoed again to the blows, whenever Captain Punch laughed or shook his head or uttered any observation that was distasteful to Captain Parfitt.

I left them disputing, and walked some distance forward to smoke a pipe. After a while Captain Parfitt left the deck, taking his chart below with him, and somewhat later Captain Punch was borne into the cabin by the two sailors. When Mr. Wilson found himself alone, he stepped over to the wheel, and I guessed by the twirl which the man at the helm gave the spokes that Mr. Wilson had shifted the course.

This, indeed, proved the case. Scarcely had ten minutes elapsed when Captain Punch's servant arrived on deck and called out to Mr. Wilson:

"The captain's orders are that the ship is to be brought to the course which she was steering when he was carried below."

"My compliments to Captain Punch," answered Mr. Wilson, "and tell him that he has given me charge of this vessel, and that I'm not going to learn navigation at my time of life from any man alive, be his name Parfitt, or be his name Punch, or be his name Judy, by thunder!"

This insolent speech reached the ears of Captain Punch, who was below in the cabin under the skylight, which lay wide open. The roar that followed was that of a bull. It was by no means inarticulate, however. The sea-words the old fellow employed were so much to the purpose that Mr. Wilson, going to the skylight, cried down: "It's all right, sir, it's all right; don't excite yourself," and he then audibly directed the man at the wheel to bring the ship to the course commanded by Captain Punch.

I was astonished to find Mr. Wilson acting in opposition

to Captain Punch. He had shipped as Punch's first mate, and Punch was indisputably his chief, however Parfitt might have stood in this complicated business. But I speedily discovered that Mr. Wilson was an extraordinarily conceited and very bad-tempered man. He guessed that old Punch was not going to improve in health; and so, since Punch had made him master of the ship, he was clearly determined to remain master at all costs, in defiance even of Punch himself.

All three men had notions of their own as to the courses to be steered. One was always something to the eastward or something to the southward of the others. Captain Punch had a tell-tale compass in his cabin, and when he was too ill with the gout to be carried on deck he would send his servant to the man at the wheel with instructions to luff or to let her go off as it might happen. But these alterations in the direction pursued by the ship, he was able to contrive to his own satisfaction only when the carpenter happened to have the watch, for if an order came from Punch when Captain Parfitt or Mr. Wilson was on deck it was instantly countermanded, with the result that when the captains met in the cabin they would quarrel wildly for an hour at a time, threatening one another with the law, sneering at one another's experiences, often clenching fists; indeed, and on more than one occasion very nearly coming to blows.

The frequent changing of the ship's course, together with the incessant interference of these men one with another, considerably delayed our passage, and there were times when I would think that we should never double the Cape of Good Hope at all; but that, on the contrary, the three captains would quarrel themselves out of all perception of the ship's true reckoning, and end either in putting the vessel ashore, or in sending a boat to land on the first bit of coast they might sight to learn from the natives of the place where we were. Often, as I could observe, they differed merely to spite one another. For instance, Captain Parfitt, on quitting the deck, would leave the ship under all plain sail, royals set, and tacks boarded; but Wilson, who kept watch and watch with the ship's carpenter (acting, in this respect, as chief mate, though the moment he arrived on deck he asserted himself as captain, took command, and carried out his own ideas of steering and of carrying sail, and the line, without the least regard

to the views and instructions of Punch and Parfitt)—Wilson, I say, on relieving the deck after Parfitt, had gone below, would look up at the sails, and then round upon the sea, as though studying the weather, then coolly sing out orders to clew up this and haul down that, taking not the least notice of Parfitt, who, on hearing the men crying out at the ropes, would rush on deck and ask Wilson what he meant by shortening sail in the face of a high barometer; while through the skylight you might hear the voice of Captain Punch roaring out to know what sail the ship was carrying, and what that fellow Wilson meant by altering the course by three-quarters of a point.

Even about such a matter as side-lights the quarrels were frequent, for Parfitt insisted upon exhibiting lights, saying that he was a married man, with a family of children dependent upon him, and that he was not going to be run down and drowned out of hand because Punch was a rapacious old hunk, who did not know his duty as a shipmaster; while Punch, on the other hand, swore that there should be no side-lights exhibited aboard his ship; that he had managed to pass thirty-eight years at sea without ever having been in collision, and without ever having had more to show in a moment of extremity than the binnacle lamp; that oil was dear, that he was captain, and that the boatswain would know what to do if the side-lights were shown.

It will be supposed that no ship was ever more miserably uncomfortable to a passenger than the *Biddy McDougal* was to me. Fortunately the sailors were a body of respectable men; they took their orders as they received them, grinning, indeed, when those words were contradictory, and sometimes grumbling pretty loudly when they were put to unnecessary work through one captain countermanding the instructions which another had given before leaving the deck. Indeed, had the crew been mutinously disposed, they might have found plenty of excuses for conduct that need not have stopped short of actual "piracy"—which, to be plain, is another word for running away with a vessel.

We were to call at Cape Town, and I had made up mind, if Heaven ever permitted us to cast anchor in Table Bay, to go ashore and represent the state of the ship to those who might be empowered to deal with the three captains; though I would sometimes think that it was doubtful whether there

was any remedy within the reach of the authorities to apply, for it was certain that Punch was still in command of the ship, and next that, being in command, he had a right to intrust the charge of the vessel to the chief mate while he was confined below by illness, so that, despite the Rangoon authorities, Parfitt had no official representation on board, had no claim upon the obedience of Mr. Wilson, and could achieve no end by logging him or by threatening. Indeed, Parfitt seemed to have guessed as much, for often as he talked of "breaking" the mate, as he called Wilson, and sending him forward, I do not think that he ever attempted to do so, though repeatedly and sarcastically invited to the attempt by both Captain Punch and Wilson himself.

It came at last to pass that on a certain day we were supposed to be off the Cape of Good Hope. We were then exactly two months and three weeks out from Rangoon; that is to say, we had occupied eleven weeks in measuring the Indian and the Southern Oceans down to that part of the sea where we were supposed to be. I say supposed, not, as you may conclude, because the three captains, as I call them, had lost all reckoning and knew no longer where the ship was, but because the weather had been so thick for no less a period than ten days that never once was the sun, the moon, or a star to be seen, and the position, therefore, of the Biddy McDougal was wholly calculated by what is termed dead reckoning.

Dead reckoning means briefly the finding out of the speed of a ship through the water per hour by means of a contrivance called the reel log. When the speed is ascertained, it is entered in the log-book. Allowance is then made for what is called leeway, if any leeway exist; and the sum of the speed, together with the courses which may have been steered, enables the mariner to mark down upon his chart with more or less accuracy the points of latitude or longitude at which his ship has arrived.

The three captains were agreed in their dead reckoning. They could find no cause for a quarrel in the indication of the reel log. The allowance for leeway was assented to and the courses steered were admitted, but, unhappily, the three captains had been at loggerheads over the reckoning before the thick weather came on. Captain Punch had made the ship's situation a degree or two more than Mr. Wilson found

it. Wilson's longitude was several leagues to the eastward of Captain Parfitt's. Hence, when the day arrived which, according to Parfitt's reckoning, should show the ship to the westward of Agulhas, the arguments and quarrels were incessant, because Wilson swore that the ship's longitude was at least sixty miles east of that cape, while Punch, on the other hand, persisted in maintaining that the latitude was not what Wilson and Parfitt represented, and that the vessel's course, therefore, required more northing.

So matters stood on a dull, heavy, thick day, as well I remember. There was a light breeze off the port bow, and a long ocean swell was sluggishly rolling up from the southward. I do not recollect that the lead was hove. Every man of the three skippers was cocksure of the ship's position on his own account, but I do not say that any one of them ever once ordered a cast of the lead to be taken. There was nothing to be seen. The sea line was shrouded by vapor to within two or three miles of the vessel. Occasionally there was a rumble of thunder in the south, but no lightning.

Thus it remained throughout the day, and the three captains did nothing but alter one another's directions to the man at the wheel. All day long Captain Punch was in a towering passion. He said that he knew the ship's whereabouts as surely as though Table Bay lay open before him, that Parfitt was out by leagues, and Wilson utterly wrong, that both men might thank God that he was too much afflicted to occupy his proper post on deck in such damp and filthy weather, or—and here he would shake his immense gouty fist at the skylight and bid his servant step on deck and ascertain how the ship's head was; and then, on learning that the course which he had ordered Parfitt and Wilson to steer had been changed by one or the other of them, he would roar out like a bull, using many strong and terrible words, threatening to take Captain Parfitt's life if he interfered with his orders to the helmsman.

When I went to bed that night, I was unable to sleep for some time owing to the argument which the three captains were holding in their cabin. I could hear such exclamations as: "My life's as precious to me as yours is to you;" "north-east, d'ye say! Good angels, and yet they granted ye a certificate?" "If the chronometers are out, that's not my fault; but if my calculations wasn't within a second of the right

spot before this blooming mist drew up and hid the sky, I'll give up, own that I'm no sailorman, and I'll call ye both my masters."

To such stuff as this I lay listening; then I heard some sailors come below to cart old Captain Punch away to bed. There was an interval of agreeable silence and I fell asleep.

I was awakened by an uproar on deck, by the shouts of men, the bawling of Captain Punch in his cabin, by a hurry of footsteps, and a sullen flapping of canvas. The ship lay over at a sharp angle; I believed at first that a heavy squall had burst upon her and heeled her down, but she lay perfectly motionless, with a singular noise of creaking threading the above-board clamor and a frequent, dull, thunderous thump as of water striking her.

In a moment I realized that the ship was ashore!

I partially clothed myself in a few minutes, rushed out, and with great difficulty, so acute was the angle of the ship's deck, reached the companion steps. All was in darkness. I put out my hands and touched a figure, and now grew sensible of somebody just in front of me, panting heavily, and from time to time groaning. It was Captain Punch, in whom the agony and helplessness of the gout had been temporarily conquered by wrath and terror. He reached the deck unaided and fell a-roaring.

There was little to be seen. Here and there a man held a lantern, but the light was feeble and the illumination revealed merely confused the sight. The ship lay over with her broadside to the sea; the dark heave of swell burst against the bilge and recoiled in milk that flung a dim sheen upon the atmosphere of the night, making the quietly flapping sails glance out. It was very thick; there was nothing of the land to be seen. The carpenter was sounding over the side, and I heard him bawl out the depth, but there was no depth. The Biddy McDougal was hard and fast upon the African strand, with Parfitt and Wilson yelling out contradictory orders, and Punch bawling to his men to obey him and nobody else.

Just before daylight the weather cleared; and disclosed the high coast along our starboard beam, and I gathered from the tempestuous disclosure of the three captains that we had gone ashore somewhere near Cape Hanglip and Sandewn Bay, proving that, though Captain Parfitt's calculations

had come nearest the truth, all three men had been heavily out in their reckoning.

Scarcely had the sun risen when a gunboat hove in sight, bound from the eastward to Simon's Town. She sighted our ship ashore and sent boats. I was heartily glad to get aboard of her. Captain Parfitt and five of the crew also went aboard; but old Punch declined to leave the neighborhood of the vessel. He said that there was no immediate danger, that he would go ashore, and make shift under canvas until assistance should be sent from Cape Town. Wilson remained with him.

The ship was ultimately got off, and navigated to England by Wilson and Captain Punch in the cabin; but by that time I had received my luggage from the hold of the *Biddy McDougal*, had transferred it to another vessel, and was abreast of Ascension on my way to England.

PAULE'S BLUEBELLS

BY LEON BIGOT

In this pathetic sketch, the overflowing vitality of the merry-makers—who dart to and fro on the Seine in their frail skiffs, or dance wildly on the little island—is finely contrasted with the quiet ebbing of a young life, amid the strains of music and shouts of the revellers. Translated from the French by Henry Jordan, for Short Stories.

They arrived at dusk. In the distance Mont Valerien lay quiet and peaceful as a slumbering lion. A light mist enveloped it, falling from the blue sky, across which the setting sun cast golden flames. Two steps away Paris grumbled.

The Seine surrounded the Grande Jatte Isle with a low, gentle murmur, a murmur that was one long caress, and there was in the atmosphere a perfume of flowers and freshly mown grass.

Along the driveway on the other side of the river, carriages passed at a trot, bearing the happy occupants to the promenade or taking them back to the city. On the water, joyous merry-makers flew by in yawls that seemed like toys, the rowers shouting loud salutes to a big, lumbering towboat, black and awkward, which made them dance like cockle-shells on the waves made by its paddles. And the ferrymen, who, for one sou a passenger, made the crossing from bank to bank, paused to let pass the enormous mass of barges dragged in tow, while the alert, laughing, noisy oarsmen, full of bravado, dashed by briskly plying their sculls.

The Seine, then, was full of laughter, rolling its green waters with a crisp, chopping sound that seemed to cry out to all, "Come on! Come on!" and brushed the banks with a sly little kiss that bent the reeds and the water-lilies still ungathered by the promenaders; while the rascally sparrows—little vagabonds with their sweethearts—leaped and skipped in the grassy nooks, near which the greenish scum of tiny rivulets made moving spots of emerald.

From time to time a pretty girl at the tiller threw a laugh to the wind; voices sounded everywhere; tights and jerseys, red and white caps, and the gay toilettes of women, casting for a moment the flash of their vivid color upon the rolling waves, came and went and were little by little effaced by the thickening mist that the heat drew from the water.

"Oh, if only I had some bluebells!"

Paule spoke feebly, in a soft, muffled voice, like the cooing of a bird. Her friend had made her a tiny nest of moss; and near the little birch yawl, drawn out on the grass, seated or rather reclining there, her white flannel skirts spread out around her, her black, curly hair, thick and abundant, bringing out by contrast the ivory pallor of her skin, she seemed, herself—with that faint, wavering red deepening and paling in the wan cheeks—some strange, frail blossom.

She wanted bluebells, the whim of a child, of one incurably ill! Her beautiful dark eyes, surrounded by bluish circles and shaded by long, curling lashes—eyes almost too big for the delicate face—sparkled with desire—she wanted bluebells!

“But, dearest,” her friend responded, “there are no bluebells here.”

“True! How very annoying!”

And she gave a sigh that was nearly a sob in her sunken little bosom.

All at once a joyous racket came through the trees, the crash of a bass drum and the flourishes of trombones, marking the time of a gay quadrille. The boatmen of the Seine dance with all their heart at these island balls! Paule listened and joyously clapped her hands.

“Come, let us see them!” said she.

And he, with a gentle, kindly smile, full nevertheless of an unavowed sadness, he, Paule's friend, held out his two strong hands and said simply:

“Get up, then.”

In the cabaret frequented by the boatmen the crowd was dense; pretty and gayly dressed girls in the arms of stalwart oarsmen—every muscle of the body plainly outlined under the thin woven shirts—madly whirled about the table of the drinkers. An orchestra of some dozen musicians, led by a signor something or other, the name spread out in letters a foot long on a gaudy poster, played a furious quadrille.

Some of the dancers affected the style of the choregraphs of the outer barriers, their gambollings, springs, and alert gymnastics; some, more serious, dance sedately and without bothering themselves with the manner of others, gallantly leading their loved ones here and there, with a certain fine and lofty scorn of their surroundings.

Truly a strange medley, in which friend and stranger elbowed each other as chance threw them together, and each took pleasure, according to his taste, intoxicating himself with the breath of the evening, while the perfume of Pernod mingled in the air with the smoke of pipes and cigars, to be quickly swept to the river, or to hang for a moment—little blue clouds in the trees—as if caught by the branches.

"Ah, but life is good!" sighed Paule, leaning heavily on the arm of her friend.

Life! the eternal dream of those early doomed, of those that dream of a morrow they will never see, of a morrow already flying! Paule had in her eyes now the intoxication of a blissful vision! Why could she not have in reality the joy that her eyes beheld, the deceptive mirage of the happiness of others.

Suddenly she uttered a little cry.

"Bluebells! Bluebells, Henri!"

It was true, there they were on the corsage of one of the women. She had passed like a whirlwind close beside them. On the gray robe of the dancer the flowers stuck out in an enticing tuft, and her cavalier, a lad of perhaps twenty years, seemed to breathe in the odor and to draw from the faint perfume an always increasing strength to clasp his companion to him.

Paule eagerly stretched out her thin little hands.

"I want some bluebells!" said she, and she bent as if to seize them.

But the couple whirled on; it was nearing the end of the quadrille, and they whirled on and on and down the length of the ballroom, while the music played loudly and the day finished dying, but from time to time the dancers returned to pass again beside Paule's table. Her wide-open eyes still followed with eager interest the dance of the blue flowers on the breast of the smiling waltzer.

A sorrowful shadow insensibly clouded the brow of Paule's friend. The flowers that the little one dreamed of having were really her life. She would never, never have them. For her, all was ended. They had told him so at the Hospital de la Petié, when he had gone there to seek her.

"My good monsieur," the infirmary chief had said to him, "it is merely a question of time."

The chaplain whom Paule had wished to see, and who had been the confidant of her griefs, had murmured in his ear:

"She is lost, monsieur, poor child; make her happy six months—at most."

And the priest, persisting in the belief that Paule was his wife, had added:

"It is the duty of a good husband."

And really, after all, why should she not have the flowers she wanted—why should not he, her friend, gratify the little one's innocent desire?

"Wait!" said he.

And as the dance had ended, he rose and went straight to the shady little thicket where the one with the bluebells had taken refuge to rest for a moment with her breathless partner. The orchestra played now a dreamy song-waltz, to which some danced and all joined in the words, the deep bass of the men supporting and strengthening the treble of the *grisettes*, the leader of the band pointing the measure gayly, and lending his aid to direct and harmonize this choral and instrumental concert.

Paule, leaning back in her chair, delighted with everything, had a tight, harsh little cough that from time to time was smothered in her handkerchief, but the surrounding joy was insensibly infectious; Paule's face soon was radiant with a smile that made her for an instant beautiful with youth and health. Then her friend was back again, a bunch of bluebells in his hand.

"You have them!" cried she, "you have the bluebells!"

Her friend did not answer, but held them to her. She seized them as a child seizes an offered plaything, with a brusque gesture, inspired apparently at once by pleasure and fear—the pleasure of having, the fear of losing.

But how had her friend secured the bluebells? One must truly love much to be capable of a devotion that borders on the ridiculous. Two words had told the story of the happy girl with the flowers.

He wanted them, he said, his voice trembling with dread of a refusal, for a poor sick child; a mad caprice, he knew it well, but no one was selling them; he could not buy them, and disappointment would sadden the last hours of a dying one. Then, compassionately, before her dumb-struck escort

could bow or say "yes," the girl had pulled them from her breast and thrust the bluebells into his hand.

"You have them!" repeated Paule, and, without asking how he had obtained them, she took them tenderly in her hot clasp, carried them to her lips, and pinned them to her corsage, smiling, content and proud.

Her friend regarded her sadly, with swimming eyes, his gaze vague and absent. Beyond the present, so near, he saw the morrow. It was cruel—terrible!

Ah, but life was short! And men but fools to live as if it were long! And for such trifles, too, did vitality expend itself, wiseacres and artists use up their wits, lawyers sow ruin, and politics and war do the rest! That poor little bloodless body, so pretty, so frail, nearly transparent, that a cold breeze would wither to-morrow like a leaf without sap—was it not the image of life, so brief and fleeting?

Dear little Paule! She would last, like the bluebells she loved, just long enough to charm—and to be gathered!

Meanwhile, all about them the music, noise, and laughter went on.

Evening now had fallen, and everywhere they were setting the tables, among the trees and the shrubbery and along the banks, brilliant with Venetian lanterns; some of the boatmen were going away, whole boat-trains in fact, but double as many had come and still were coming.

Paule's friend, seeing the ever-deepening flame in the white little face, led her to a *kiosque* that overlooked the Seine.

"Are we going to dine here?" demanded she happily.

"Yes, dearest; and if you are too much tired, as I believe, I will have the yawl put in a boat-house and we will also sleep here, that you may rest."

Paule clasped her hands delightedly; the idea of sleeping on the isle made her smile immediately.

"And I shall see the Seine running under the stars all night long," said she.

"But no; you'll be sleeping."

"I? Oh, no, I sleep so little."

It was true, she did not sleep. At night the cough killed her, the fever burned her, ceaselessly, without respite. Even now, with the sun an hour gone, the little handkerchief was raised more and more frequently to the pale lips.

Just then a servant entered and set down a lamp. Paule spread out her flowers on the clean white cloth, nonchalantly leaned her elbows on the table and her chin in her two hands, such feeble, bloodless little hands, like bits of snow!

"If only," sighed she presently, in her soft, weary voice, answering some unspoken thought, "if only I could dine on flowers, like the butterflies!"

Something strange in her tone made her friend raise wondering eyes; she continued, never heeding:

"Yes, on flowers—these bluebells here!"—her voice broke a little, but she went on bravely, "for—for I am going *soon*, and I know it. But I am very happy, all the same, knowing it. . . . And because of it—knowing it, I mean—that I wanted—just for the last time, to come with you to-day. If I could eat bluebells like the butterflies, they would spring from my grave, come up all around me, growing from my body, and—and you could gather them." Oh, the heartbreak in the pitiful little voice!

As she spoke, slowly, with evident effort, but smiling at her friend to prove to him that she was indeed happy, Paule strove to raise her head and give her hand to her startled lover, who, unwilling to see the truth, had still not moved.

But the support of her hand removed, the heavy little head fell helplessly forward on the table, and the pale brow lay among the scattered bluebells.

"Paule! Paule!" cried her friend, springing with a sob toward the poor little body.

Just at that moment, after a brief rest, the orchestra began again, a waltz by Strauss, to which whirled couples intoxicated with life, while the rowers, departing in their illuminated crafts, accompanied with their strong young voices the strains of the horns and violins.

But Paule heard no longer; Paule was gone, though the soul, perhaps, still hovered over the fading bluebells that the tears of her friend bathed with a scalding dew.

And all the Seine, under the moon that silvered it, rang with cries and songs from the Bineau bridge to the bridge of Asnières, and the river rolled its waters with a murmuring sound that seemed to say "Come on! come on!" and brushed its banks with a sly little kiss that bent the reeds and the water-lilies; while in the distance Mont Valerien slept now under a sky full of stars, and two steps away Paris grumbled.

DAVIS' DISCOVERY

Filled with after-dinner enthusiasm, the hero of this story experiments with his personal identity; but, to his horror, finds that he has indeed accomplished a transmigration of souls and merged his individuality in that of a man for whose person he cherishes an ardent antipathy. From All the Year Round.

I always did dislike Simpkins. If there is one thing, of the truth of which I am entirely convinced, it is of the veracity of that statement.

And the next fact, of the truth of which I am equally well assured, is that Simpkins detested me with corresponding fervor.

He is a prig, is Simpkins, and apparently possessed of the firm opinion that the world revolves round him; that he, Simpkins, is the pivot upon which everything depends; and if other people don't or won't see it, they are purblind idiots. I have no doubt that if you asked Simpkins his unbiassed opinion of myself, he would give the same description of me as I have just applied to him—he might even put it stronger; but in any case, it would probably amount to the same thing.

"That fellow Gregson," I can imagine him saying—I'm Gregson—"is a confounded jackass! I can't conceive for a moment how any one can possibly see anything in the man, or tolerate such a mass of conceit and ignorance. He's a humbug, sir!"

You see I ascribe inferior language and a lower way of expressing himself to Simpkins than I do to myself; but there's no refinement of feeling in him, as any one could tell at a glance from his taste in trousers. Did any one ever see such abnormal checks, such Brobdingnagian stripes, as adorn the lower portion of Simpkins' anatomy? Can't you always judge of a man's character by his clothes? I can; and when a fellow wears a watch-chain heavy enough to restrain the gambols of an average-sized British mastiff, don't you always put him down in your own mind as a cad? I do. But, then, Simpkins says I'm a cad—that is, he told Jim Turner, who told Hoskins of the Civil Service, who is a particular friend of mine, so of course, Hoskins told me. What is one's most particular friend for, except to repeat all the disagreeable comments he hears about you? At any rate, that's what Hoskins does in my case.

"Gregson," he said, "do you know Simpkins says you're an out-and-out cad, and he doesn't care who knows it?"

"What does it matter what a conceited ass like Simpkins says?" I replied in the calm and unruffled manner which is peculiar to me, and which some people are born with and others spend all their lives trying to attain and can't. "What does it matter what he says," I repeated, "so long as I'm not?"

Hoskins was rather taken aback at this.

"Oh, well, you know, you said the same thing of Simpkins."

"That's a very different thing," I replied, "because he is one."

"Oh," said Hoskins, and that was all.

To go back a little, then, you must know that Simpkins and I have never spoken to each other, and are not even supposed to know each other by sight. There seems to be a sort of fate in this. Very often when I call at a house, some one says, "Oh, Mr. Gregson, what a pity! You've just missed meeting Mr. Simpkins; he's only just this moment left." Then I say how very sorry I am, and I dare say when they say the same to Simpkins he replies in a similar strain; for we both seem to know the same people and frequent the same haunts, which makes it the more remarkable. Sometimes I've been half inclined to think that this avoidance on his part is intentional, and that Simpkins bolts out one way while they are letting me in another. Just the same thing happened when we were boys. He and I both attended the same school, with the same result; he left at the end of one term, and I came at the beginning of the other. But I was always coming upon traces of him, and he seemed to have left an atmosphere of himself behind, that lasted all my time. Whatever anybody else did—according to the scholastic annals—Simpkins had done better, whatever it might have been. Whether it was football, or Latin verse, or the wholesale consumption of apple-tarts, in each and all Simpkins had left a record which it was impossible to beat. This I felt to be hard on me; to have my prowess in the cricket field, and my capabilities with regard to the assimilation of cheese-cakes, compared—and always unfavorably, mind you—with my predecessor's accomplishments in the same line was, to say the least, galling. I grew to hate Simpkins before I ever set eyes on him. I felt sure, even then, that he was

a cad, and in this assumption I was quite justified, for he is—that is, he was—or at any rate—well, never mind.

It is a very singular thing, but it happens that nearly all my own friends and personal acquaintances are at any rate on speaking terms with Simpkins, and so I'm always hearing about him from one or the other of them. For instance, Chalker, who's in the pink-tape department, will say to me: "Oh, by the bye, Gregson, I met Simpkins out the other night, and took a hand at whist with him; capital game he plays, too—don't trump his partner's best card like you do, old man!" Or take Waggletail, who's in something sticky—I forget whether it's glue or guava jelly—he'll say: "What a pity it is, Gregson, that you don't know Simpkins—first-rate fellow, Simpkins—capital company he is, and can tell a good story when he likes, too. He gave us an account of an adventure of his in Ireland, the other evening after supper, that quite took the shine out of your tale about the bathing-machine. You really ought to know him, Gregson; he'd do you no end of good." This is the sort of thing that palls upon a man after a time—after a very short time too. Yet you would have thought that the world would have been big enough for Simpkins and me too, but it evidently wasn't from the manner in which he was perpetually getting in the way and blocking up all my particular thoroughfares.

I quite gave up visiting the Tomlinses—nice family, too; three or four daughters, all musical; and the father, a jolly old boy, who kept a good cellar—simply because they got to know Simpkins. I was always encountering him on the front steps, or clashing up against him on the door-mat—he was sure to be coming away when I was arriving, or putting in an appearance when I was taking my departure. So after a time I gave up going to the Tomlinses altogether, and the next thing I heard was that Simpkins was engaged to the third girl, Roberta—of course that was the one I preferred—and six months or so afterward they were married. To think now that, with I forget how many surplus females in the world, Simpkins and I must both make a set at the same one! But that is all of a piece with the rest of his behavior. By this time he and I had got as far as scowling at each other when we met—though each of us still kept up the farce of pretending not to know who on earth the other fellow was. On rainy days, as I passed him sometimes on the way to the

station, if I could possibly contrive so that he came in for some of the drippings off my umbrella, it made me feel comparatively cheerful for the rest of the day; whereas, if Simpkins, in taking the wall, could manage to shoulder me into a puddle, I used to fancy that I could hear him snicker to himself as the muddy water squirted up my leg.

Well, as I've said before, he married Roberta Tomlins about two years ago—Bob, I used to call her before he came on the scene—and the result is, twins. Of course, that's Simpkins all over. What did he want with twins more than anybody else? He was bumptious enough without that. Some people might say that he didn't want them, and would have preferred a single edition of himself—they're both boys—but I don't believe that for a moment. Doesn't a double perambulator take up more room than a single one? And don't twins make more noise in the world than one would?

I belong to a club—we both belong to a club, only it isn't the same one. Mine is the "City and Central," his is the "West End Wayfarers." I put up myself for the "Wayfarers," but was blackballed—of course, by Simpkins; and he at one time wished to belong to the "City and Central," but was also blackballed—equally, of course, by me. But I know one or two members of the "Wayfarers," and occasionally drop in there as a visitor. I dined there a week or two back with Jack Davis, an old friend of mine, and it was on this occasion that a most remarkable event, experience, or whatever you like to call it befell me, which I am about to relate, and which I have all this time been gradually leading up to. Simpkins was there, of course, sitting in one armchair, with his feet on another—beastly behavior, I call it—with his hat on the back of his head, reading the paper.

"There's Simpkins," said Davis, nodding to him; "shall I ask him to join us? He's capital company and a rattling good fellow."

"On no account," I answered in a hurry. "That is to say, not at all; or, if you do, you must excuse me."

"Why, what's the matter with the man?" he asked. "I've always found him most agreeable and gentlemanly; but have it your own way."

And I did. It was a very good dinner Davis gave me—a very good dinner, indeed—if only he hadn't insisted upon talking such nonsense all the time. He's always going in

for some ridiculous project and propounding impossible and unheard-of theories on all sorts of subjects. This time his particular hobby happened to be nothing less than the doctrine of transmigration, with the latest variations. The last time I had met him it had been "Volapük," and the time before that "The Moral and Social Elevation of Costermongers." He began with the soup.

"Gregson," he said, "I don't know whether you've ever given your mind to the subject of transmigration?"

"You mean emigration, I suppose?" I said, with my mouth full.

"No, I don't; nothing of the kind," he answered hastily; "I mean neither more nor less than the passing from one state of being to another—the passage of the soul, after death, into another body. Now, I dare say, Gregson," he continued, passing the bottle, "you've never even given a thought to the subject, or felt the slightest curiosity as to what your *status* in life might have been in a previous condition?"

Davis was quite right, I hadn't.

"Or felt any desire to know what shape or substance you may assume in a future one? For you know, Gregson," impressively, "your present existence will undoubtedly become merged and lost in another, and it may be a widely different phase of being." Here he leaned across the table and prodded me in the ribs, to awake my slumbering interest. "You know this won't be the last of you by a long way—this is merely, so to speak, the outside case, and when you've worn it out, sooner or later, your spirit will pass from it and occupy another, and one, perhaps, not in the least resembling it. You might even be a butterfly, Gregson," he continued, looking at me contemplatively, "or a—or some other fellow and start again as a baby in long frocks."

I knew it was of no use contradicting or arguing with him when he'd picked up a new theory, so I merely said I was quite willing to have my remains worked up into some fresh form when I'd done with them—the same as my brother Bob's clothes used to be cut down to fit me when he had finished wearing them; still, I thought that there would be more than enough stuff left to make a butterfly; in fact, I preferred—if I might be allowed a voice in the matter—the bulldog scheme, as thereby (only I kept this to myself) I might be able to harass Simpkins' calves—only Simpkins, under simi-

lar circumstances, wouldn't be himself, and in his next metamorphosis mightn't have any calves to harass.

Davis shook his head and sighed.

"Ah, I was afraid you'd take it in this way.—they all do; but I'd expected better things of you, Gregson. Try the claret. Now, do you mean to tell me seriously that it's of no consequence to you whether you pass the next phase of your existence as"—looking round for his inspiration—"as an oyster or a—an omnibus conductor?"

"Not a bit," I answered, staring hard at Simpkins, who had now come in and was dining at a table opposite. Davis looked at me reproachfully, dropped the subject, and splashed the gravy.

But toward the end of the repast, after the bottle, or I should say bottles, had circulated freely, and the eye of Davis had begun to beam benevolently on surrounding objects, animate or inanimate, and I was conscious myself of a feeling of almost good-fellowship toward Simpkins, who was enjoying his dinner as freely as though there were no such circumstances as twins to be considered or provided for in the near future—he picked up the thread of his former argument, and leaning across the table, continued in a low, mysterious tone of voice:

"Gregson, my boy, what would you say if I told you there was such a thing as transmigration of souls before death?"

"What should I say, Davis?" I replied facetiously. "I should say that you're a brick, and the claret's first-rate."

He took no notice of my remark, but brought his chair round the table until it was close to mine, and uttered these remarkable words:

"I tell you, Gregson, that it is possible for a man of strong will, under certain circumstances and by exerting his mental powers to the utmost, to project his spirit and individuality into that of some other person and occupy the outward semblance of another being; and while still retaining his own proper intellectual capacity and existence, to live and move in some different fleshly tenement than his own. It's a most remarkable discovery, this of mine, Gregson, and you're the first I've revealed it to! There's only one circumstance which baffles me, and that is, what becomes of your own proper personality when you're masquerading round in some one else's bones? But for that I should have tried the experiment myself

before this, and projected myself into the outward fabric of—say, Mr. Gladstone or the Archbishop of Canterbury; only the question remains, Who would take charge of my own body in the mean time? I shouldn't like to leave myself lying about anywhere, for fear of mistake—of seeing my name in the police intelligence, or perhaps of even getting buried, under a wrong impression, before I could get back and lay claim to myself. You see, the subject is in itself so vast and opens such a field for conjecture that it is almost more than the mind can grasp."

I did see it, or at least tried to look as though I did; but, to tell the truth, I was just then engaged in staring hard at Simpkins, who was now leaning back in his chair and picking his teeth, in what appeared to me a peculiarly personal and aggressive manner; though, as I looked, it struck me that there was a haziness in his outlines and a want of finish about his features which was unusual to him, or, at any rate, which I had not remarked before. It occurred to me, however, what a joke it would be to—what was the term Davis had made use of?—project myself into Simpkins. It was worth thinking about, and the more I thought about it the more the idea tickled me. To borrow Simpkins' body and turn him out of it—evict him, in short—would be no end of a lark! I could hear Davis still droning away in my ears, but I was too much amused at my own notion to pay great attention to what he was saying. Simpkins, too, of all men! I suppose we stayed another half-hour or so at the club, and Davis ordered spirits and cigars, of which we both partook. After this, Simpkins' outline seemed to become still more blurred and undefined, and at one time it even appeared to me as though there were two Simpkinses.

I mentioned this fact to Davis, as being rather peculiar, and asked him if he had ever heard of Simpkins having a twin brother, but he only laughed and said, "Come along, old chap, we'll get out of this." And then I fancy we left the room, for the last thing I recollect seeing was the twin Simpkinses, each smoking a couple of cigars and imbibing something liquid out of an indefinite number of tumblers with what seemed like a most unnecessary profusion, not to say bad taste.

The next thing I remember clearly was finding myself in a cab, I suppose, driving homeward, with my mind still harp-

ing on Davis' remarkable theory, and then, all at once, a peculiar and indescribable feeling came over me of having on some one else's boots, accompanied also by a strange sensation of some one else's corn on one of my toes. Before I had by any means successfully solved this puzzle, the cab came to a stop before a house—my house, evidently—and though I didn't remember having given the cabman my address, he appeared at the door of the vehicle and, wrenching open the door, announced, "Here you are!" So I got out and paid him, and sauntered slowly—in consequence of the undesirable presence of that unexplained corn—up the path to the front door, in which I inserted my latch-key, and entered the house. There was a light burning in the hall, but turned down very low in order to economize the gas—so low, in fact, that on advancing toward the umbrella stand I fell over some large and unfamiliar object and bruised my shins unmercifully. I made a few secular observations to myself on the subject, and proceeded to investigate the stumbling-block.

It was a perambulator! Now, what on earth, I thought to myself, does my landlady mean by sticking such a thing as this in my way for me to fall over and nearly break my legs, and who has she got stopping with her that requires such an apparatus? Confound the thing; and I gave it a vicious kick, with a total disregard of consequences and my newly acquired corn. For the next five minutes or so, I was fully occupied in hugging my foot and uttering profanities with reference to that infantile equipage. Then I picked myself up and made for my sitting-room, the door of which was ajar, showing the gas also turned down low and the fire nearly out. In no very good humor, I proceeded to rake the coals together and turn up the gas. Why hadn't the landlady put more coals on before she went to bed, when she knew I hated to come home late and find nothing but a few burned-out cinders, and the coal-scuttle empty? However, there were the whiskey decanter and the biscuits on the table, as usual, and some cold meat; but all the time I was conscious of something different—something I couldn't define. It wasn't the room—that seemed all right—and I knew just where everything was. For instance, in the cupboard on the left-hand side of the fireplace was my tobacco jar; but was it my tobacco jar? Why, of course it was. And what was

in that tin next to it? Why, condensed milk, of course. I knew it was, without reading the label, only—what on earth did I want with condensed milk? I gave it up as a bad job, as I did several other things which puzzled me, such as a work-basket on a table by the window and a very small pair of—what looked like—doll's socks, apparently undergoing repairs, which couldn't by any possibility belong to me, and yet there was something familiar about them too as though I'd seen them before under different circumstances.

Finally, I sat down, and, having compounded myself a tumbler of whiskey and water, took off my boot to see my corn. Was it the fact of finding my foot incased in a red sock, when I could have sworn that I never wore anything but black, that caused me to investigate other portions of my attire, and subsequently, on discovering further discrepancies, stand up and review myself in the looking-glass over the mantelpiece? Is it possible by the aid of mere words to chronicle my amazement on finding that the individual therein reflected was not myself at all, but Simpkins? There was his face, with the nondescript sort of nose and sandy mustache which characterized it, and the clothes, those abnormal checks, always associated with him, and that glaring and aggressive necktie—all were his. I thought of the perambulator—a double perambulator, too, if I remembered rightly—over which I had bruised my—that is, Simpkins'—shins, and the work-basket and the socks (doubtless appertaining to one of those before-mentioned twins), and the condensed milk—they were all his! This, then, was a practical exemplification of the truth of Davis' discovery—this was why things had appeared at once so strange and so familiar—this accounted for the corn on my right foot—I was not myself at all, I was Simpkins!

Davis had distinctly said that a man with a strong will might, under favorable circumstances, so exert it as to transfer himself, for the time being, into the outward form of any other individual he might fix upon for the purpose. Now, I was undoubtedly a man of strong will. This proved it unmistakably. I had in some way projected and merged my own individuality into that of Simpkins—had, in fact, become Simpkins. What I had done with my own body I didn't know—whether I'd left it behind at the club, or dropped it in the cab—but here I was, with my perambulator in the

hall, and, in all probability, my twins upstairs in the nursery, their condensed milk on the top shelf of my cupboard, and Simpkins' own particular corn adorning my extremities. Here was a go. To think that I had got a wife and family, and, if I remembered rightly, a mother-in-law overhead!

I laughed to myself, for fear of waking the twins, but suddenly remembered a fact which brought my mirth to an untimely conclusion. Suppose I couldn't find my way back again—suppose I was buried under a mistaken impression, and so had no body to get back to—suppose I had to remain as I was for the rest of my natural life? In fact there was no end to my suppositions, and, thus becoming aware of the serious nature of my position, I set myself firmly to try and will myself back again into my own proper person, wherever that might be. But it was of no good. I could not do it, although I tried for half an hour, until the perspiration streamed off me; so, taking the tumbler of whiskey and water at a draught, I sank back exhausted into an arm-chair and fell either asleep or into a state of unconsciousness.

When I awoke, or came to myself, it was morning, the gas was out, and the table laid for breakfast, and by my side stood a tall, imposing-looking figure frowning down upon me in intense disapproval. I knew that face and figure. It was Simpkins' mother-in-law, now, alas! mine, as was only too evident from the way in which she addressed me.

"Mis-ter Simpkins—John Edward! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Nine o'clock in the morning, and you've not been to bed all night! Nine o'clock in the morning, and you the father of twins, who are at this identical moment being bathed in the room over your head and screaming at the tops of their little lungs—as well they may, dear innocents, with their father not home all night, and no doubt ruining himself at billiards, until the poor dear children won't have so much as a gum-ring left to cut their teeth on before many months are over their heads!"

Overcome by this picture of destitution in the near future, she paused for a moment to take breath, while I hung my head in dejection and dismay at the situation in which I found myself. Truly, if I had known before all about this mother-in-law, I need not have hated and despised poor Simpkins to the extent I had done. Perhaps, after all, it was just as well that he, and not I, had married the third Miss Tomlins, who

now, with indignation on her brow and a twin on each arm, entered the room and proceeded to add her reproaches to those of her maternal parent.

"And, perhaps, you will have the goodness to say where you have been all night, and mamma and I sitting up for you until past twelve, and no one to help me with the children, or rock the cradle, or walk up and down with them when they were fractious, so that I never got a wink of sleep until daylight!"

I murmured something about the club, missing the last omnibus, and having to walk home. You see under the circumstances I felt obliged to stand up for Simpkins, as what had happened was not his fault at all. I wondered, too, whether this sort of thing happened every time he stopped out late. Poor Simpkins! I felt quite sorry for him. Meanwhile I pondered as the two ladies joined forces and vituperated me as to the probable whereabouts of myself. Where was I? Had I been taken up as a "drunk and incapable," or what?

"Club, indeed!" said—I suppose I must, under the circumstances, call her—my mother-in-law. "What do you, a married man, want with a club? I wonder the ceiling doesn't fall in upon you for talking in such a manner!"

If it only would, I thought to myself, and bury you in its ruins.

"Omnibus, indeed!" said my wife *pro tem.*, "a likely story. I don't believe a word of it!"

"Walk home!" said my wife and mother-in-law together; "you don't deserve to have a home!"

"Or a wife either," continued the elder lady.

"Much less twins," concluded her daughter.

I cowered before the blast and tried to hide my face, like a dissipated ostrich, behind the coffee-urn. Hostilities were abandoned for a few minutes during the entrance of the maid, bearing the matutinal bacon, but were resumed with renewed vigor in consequence of one of the twins—I don't know which, but it was the one with the baldest head and a vicious look in his eye—getting his fist jammed into the milk jug, and being rescued with much difficulty and the loss of the greater part of its contents.

"A nice father you are!" said my mother-in-law, breaking out again, as the other twin, who had, no doubt with the

best intentions, been endeavoring to cut his teeth on the handle of a fork, accidentally hit himself in the eye, and sent up a howl of anguish to the heavens! "Do you want to see the poor children murdered before your very eyes, and not so much as move a finger to help them? Do leave off staring like a born fool, and hold the children for a moment while your wife pours out the coffee!"

I obeyed; that is to say, the two squirming, squealing masses of flabby humanity were deposited one on each knee, and I was bidden to mind what I was about and not turn my poor, dear wife's hair gray with grief by dropping them under the table. To which my poor, dear wife replied, a lot I should care for that, so long as I could carry on with those painted, made-up things at the refreshment bars.

Just then, as I was meditating, in Simpkins' interests, gagging my mother-in-law with the tablecloth and depositing the twins in the coal scuttle, a diversion was occasioned by the former exclaiming:

"Ah, there he goes! A nice, quiet, gentlemanly fellow. He would never stop out all night playing cards until goodness knows what time, and wearing his wife into fiddle-strings! That's the one you ought to have married, Roberta!"

I looked and beheld—myself!—my own head and shoulders, which were all that could be seen of me over the top of the fence, passing the house, evidently on my way to the station. By Jove! there I was in my light overcoat and top hat, looking, as I could not help remarking, not at all a bad-looking chap and worth two of Simpkins any day. I tried hard, with my whole heart and soul, to will myself back again, but it was no go. There I continued to sit, with a twin cherub on each knee, and Simpkins' own particular brand of corn harassing my right foot. So she ought to have married him—that is to say, me—ought she? Not if I—that is to say, he—knew it! No, indeed! I—that is, the other fellow—had had a lucky escape, and poor old Simpkins had been the victim instead. Who would ever have thought, though, that Roberta Tomlins would have turned out such a termagant, or that Mrs. T., on the death of her husband, would come and quarter herself on her unfortunate son-in-law, making his life—with the aid of the twins—a howling wilderness? But in the mean time I wanted to know who it was had the infernal cheek to go about dressed up in my flesh

and blood? Was it Simpkins? Well, if so, I could hardly blame him, seeing that I had turned him out of his own body. Anyhow, I wasn't dead or being brought up at Bow Street, which was somewhat of a relief. The Greek chorus was still continuing its denunciations and cataloguing my iniquities over my defenceless head; but I scarcely heard or heeded them, until, in the consternation and bewilderment caused by the unexpected appearance of somebody else pretending to be me, I unfortunately allowed the bald-headed twin to anoint himself plentifully with the mustard, with distressing results.

"Inhuman wretch!" shrieked my mother-in-law. "Would you try to destroy your own innocent offspring? Give him to me, sir! You are a brute, and no more fitted to be the father of twins than——"

Something within roused me to sudden fury.

"Confound the twins!" I cried, seizing hold of them by their petticoats. "Who wants twins? I don't!"

I swung them in the air—their skulls came together with a violent crash; I heard them crack like egg-shells amid a chorus of shrieks from their female relatives.

"Now, then, are yer a-goin' to tell me where to drive yer to or not?" There was a rush of cold air upon my face as I once more regained consciousness. The cabman had opened the door of the cab and was confronting me with determination written upon his brow. "Ere 'ave I bin a-drivin' of yer about for the last hour an' a 'alf, an' not a word o' direction can I git out o' yer, an' I'm tired of it, I am."

Where was I? Who was I? How—was I Simpkins or myself? And where were the massacred innocents? I felt myself carefully all over, and came to the conclusion that I was back in my own body again. There was no corn on my right foot—it was evident, then, that my spirit had returned to its original clay tenement. I concluded to get out and walk, and, having paid a most exorbitant fare, I proceeded to take the rest of my way home on foot. I had passed through a most remarkable experience, and completely proved the truth and practicability of Davis' theory with regard to the doctrine of transmigration. But I didn't want it to occur again; the experiment had proved completely successful, but decidedly unpleasant. I pitied Simpkins from the bottom of my heart, and, when I remembered from what he had saved me, I even felt grateful to him. The most remarkable part

of it was, that it was now only half-past one in the morning. The cabman said he had been driving me about for the last hour and a half. How could I have passed through such an experience as had been mine in that little time? And what had Simpkins been doing in the mean while? I must ask Davis the next time I meet him.

I did ask him, and he laughed.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you went to sleep and dreamed it all. I put you into the cab myself, as you seemed—well, a little undecided in your movements—and that's how you came to fancy it all."

"But how about your theory?" I inquired.

Would you believe it possible, but he actually declared that I had dreamed that too!

FROM YNES TO PABLO

BY JOHN CRAIG

Guilty of the double crime of treachery to her country and lover, the heroine of this dramatic episode and her accomplice are overtaken by a sudden and tragic death. From the San Francisco Evening Post.

The Calle Oriente was deserted. Only the vigilant native police, patrolling up and down in front of the Concordia, disturbed the silence of the night by their footfalls on the narrow stone pavement. The tall palms in the Plaza cast giant shadows; the *xopelotes* in the trees flapped their great wings ominously, as though they had a premonition of some coming event that would bring food to these feathered scavengers.

Sitting on a bench in the shadow of a huge fern growing by the fountain, a slight young girl listens eagerly to catch the sound she expects will tell her of another arrival in the Plaza. That she is of the richer families is evidenced by her attire. The soft lace mantilla hides a face of rare beauty, and the great dark eyes snap and dance as she pats the gravelled walk impatiently with her dainty boot. Every nerve is strained to its highest tension, and only the excitement of the hour sustains her courage.

The troops of Guatemala and Salvador were fighting on the border, and the Church party, dominant in Salvador, was endeavoring to create disaffection among the supporters of the government in Guatemala, in order to gain ascendancy there as well. Large sums of money were being sent out of the country to support the invading army, and every effort of the specially-organized secret service failed to detect the senders.

Pablo Arica loved, and not in vain. But, for over a week, he had been troubled in mind at the efforts of Ynes to turn him from his purpose of going to the front. Why had she lost the fiery adoration of country that once possessed her? "Viva la Guatemala!" rang in his ears day and night. He could not see why she should not be filled with the same ardor. Night after night he sat by her and poured into her ear his visions of gallant acts, of the laurels he would win. But she was cold as the sea-fog that often covered the city.

To-night he could not sleep. He tossed for hours on his low bed. She had seemed so preoccupied that conversation was next to impossible, and he had left earlier than usual. He could stand this ordeal of unrest no longer. Putting on his clothes he stepped into the open air and strolled into the Plaza de Concordia to enjoy a cigarito. Selecting a retired spot, he sat flat upon the grass, and leaned back in the shadows against the tree that made them, watching the playing fountain rippling the water in the pool close by.

How long he had been there he could not tell. The patrolman had just passed through the Plaza and out upon the street; he would not pass that way again for an hour. Suddenly a woman's slender form glided quickly through the trees on the opposite side of the pool, and took the seat by the ferns near the fountain.

"God in Heaven! How like Ynes!"

It could not be. Ynes was surely his; there could be no doubt. But curiosity, born of a jealous mind, could not let a doubt cloud his faith: he must see. Creeping quickly from tree to tree, he gained a position within a few feet of the seat; he dared not go farther—he must wait.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes pass. 'They seem years to him. They are centuries to the young girl beneath the ferns.

A burly figure is coming slowly down the walk toward the spot where these two wait in anxious suspense.

"By all the saints, but he walks like Padre Pico," thought Pablo, and as the new-comer approached there was no room for doubt in the young man's mind.

"Ah, querida mia, thou hast it?" said the priest, putting both hands on the shoulders of the girl, who had sprung from her seat and stood trembling and pale before him, her whole frame quivering with excitement.

"How much hast thou, Ynes?"

"O my father! but it was so hard. The key; it turned so hard, and with a click—I thought he would awake. There are the notes—all that were in the safe—many thousands, my father," and Ynes' beautiful face beamed with a fervor that Pablo Arica had not seen in many months.

"Thou hast done a good deed. The saints reward thee. If we had more like thee, little one, this government would soon be at our feet."

Pablo's thoughts were working like the lightning that

flashes across the tropical skies after the chebasco; jealousy, hate, revenge, nearly burned his soul to tinder in those few minutes. His hand clutched convulsively the long knife he brought from under his coat.

The *zopelotes* were seated on three prostrate forms weltering in a pool of blood, when the patrolman passed again. The long knife on the walk close by bore on its silver hilt the inscription, "From Ynes to Pablo."

ADVERSE FATES

BY ERMINIA BAZZOCCHI

A simple-minded youth, with his eyes on the stars and an unattainable love in his breast, unwittingly crushes a tender heart that has been laid at his feet. Translated from the Italian, by E. Cavazza, for Short Stories.

"I am listening to you," said Annella, bending her blond little head; and Mario felt that her slender hand trembled in his.

Who was Annella?

The beautiful widow of Count Giummi had found her one day, pale, desolate, and exhausted, beside a dead woman in a squalid, dark room. That dead woman was the aunt of the countess and the mother of Annella; and the poverty which surrounded her was the sole inheritance of the fair young girl.

Countess Giummi, rich, admired, and courted by the fine flower of aristocratic *salons*, lived upon vanity and coquetry. But, in spite of that, she had a morsel of heart; and poor Annella's little white face had the power to draw two beautiful tears, more lucent than pearls, from her great, black, enchanting eyes. If the baron, the viscount, or the marquis could have seen those two pearls, surely they would have loved her even more than they did—so compassionate and tender did she seem amid the triumphs of her happy youth.

That same evening Annella reposed in a soft bed, under a counterpane of pink silk, while at the balcony window, that she had left partly open, the moon peered in and laid a tint of pallor upon the rose-red divans of the elegant little room.

Two years passed after that first tranquil sleep. Annella's beauty, which early privations and sorrows had almost withered in the bud, bloomed again as if by magic. It was a pleasure to see the radiant girl; a slender little person, but with perfect curves of outline; the bust full, the throat of admirable softness, and the little head—oh, that dainty little head was like an artist's thought. Like a golden wave, the curling hair, which she wore unbound and floating, rippled down her shoulders; her eyes laughed with the color of the clear heavens under arching, delicate eyebrows, that were black against the whiteness of her forehead and gave a reso-

lute expression to her beautiful countenance. Her small, rosy mouth was always smiling; it was but a languid smile, and tinged with an expression of melancholy or bitterness.

Now, after having sketched Annella's graceful figure, it seems strange not to be able to give it a background of bright colors. We know how much a brilliant setting adds to a gem, and certainly the Countess Giummi's beauty gained greatly by the luxury and richness of her dress and surroundings. A fashionable dressmaker, an artist in his line, dressed her with Parisian taste; a skilful young woman, who was maid and *confidante* together, combed the wealth of her dark hair, that touched the floor, and adapted to her shapely person stuffs, colors, flowers, and jewels. From their hands, the countess issued a true goddess of love; and her shrine, gleaming with silks, marbles, silver, and crystal, increased the enchantment and rendered her marvellous to the eyes of visitors.

Poor Annella! so simple in her little muslin gown; so timid in that rich house, not her own, how could she contend for the palm with that superb queen? And it is no new thing that the bright rays of the moon dim the placid light of the quiet stars. So the hundred gentleman that flocked into those gilded rooms had eyes only for the beautiful countess; and if they deigned to bestow a passing word or look on the timid girl, that was merely an act of homage to the reigning lady; homage that showed their admiration for her charity to a dependent. They all knew, and from her own mouth, too, the countess had taken the forsaken orphan to this beautiful home and changed her sorrow to happiness.

But was Annella really happy?

Her young heart thirsted for love. In her childhood she had been the one treasure of her poor mother, and, though she had often lacked bread, air, and sunlight, caresses were never wanting. She knew the sweetness of a kiss into which is transfused all a loving soul; she knew the dual life, the breath mingled with another breath from a breast palpitating with tenderness. Yes, her mother's love had taught her all these things, and taught them to her in poverty. Then came fine times; abundance of everything, new amusements every day and every hour, noisy gayeties, and the luxury of carriages and dinners. But, strange to say, amid all this laughter of life, her heart was narrowed, closed; she, indeed, no

longer suffered from hunger, cold, or fear of worse misfortunes, but henceforth she had no one to love her, nor a simple object to call forth her own love, though she felt an overpowering need to bestow on some one all her warm impassioned soul.

At first she had tried for this exchange of affection with her cousin, the magnificent countess. Alas! she had found her kind, courteous, generous, but frivolous, full of herself and her attractions, and incapable not only of feeling love, but even of comprehending it.

Discomfited, Annella had looked about her, and, amid that array of faces, coats, and decorations that made a circle around her beautiful cousin, she had sought and sought. An odd girl! She had actually found those polished gentlemen empty and unsympathetic, although finely clad and unexceptionable from top to toe. How could she have dared to raise even her thoughts to the heights on which they moved? Which of them would have deigned to descend to her, a poor little orphan, sheltered by the pity of her cousin?

Thus set apart and averse to all flatteries, she led her own life, amid the festivities and the constant noise and confusion of the house.

But one evening she discovered among the crowd a newcomer—blond and handsome like herself, and like herself sad, timid, and embarrassed. At once a secret sympathy attracted her toward young Mario. It seemed to her that she might be able to comfort him with her words, for surely he cherished a deep sorrow in his heart, since his fine face never brightened with lively color, and his eyes often glistened as if with restrained tears.

He welcomed sympathy so eagerly that it appeared as if he sought her, as if he came solely for her sake. And they soon talked freely together. After their first meeting, which was full of embarrassment to both of them, they passed all the reception evenings of the splendid countess together. Annella always awaited him with indescribable emotion, and when she saw him, appearing in the doorway, diffident and shy, all her life was concentrated in her heart, that beat, beat as if it would burst its bonds. Then with studied carelessness, he wandered through the rooms until he succeeded in placing himself at her side, from whence he did not stir until the last guests were about to leave.

Mario had told the story of his life—his poor life of discomfort and isolation. He too was an orphan, brought up by strangers who had speculated upon his talent. By force of study and effort he had at last made for himself a position that had enabled him to demand his liberty in exchange for a monthly payment. Never, poor soul, had he tasted the sweetness of mutual love.

Annella, in her secret heart, rejoiced at all this. For would it not be her privilege to give him the delights that he had never experienced, her task to make him forget the bitter-nesses of so many years, and to reward him for all his sufferings. At night how many dreams of this kind peopled the virginal little room of the young girl, and in fancy she saw herself already an adored wife, clasped to the gentle and noble breast of her beloved Mario.

One thing, however, preoccupied her mind. When she met Mario for the first time, a cloud of sadness had veiled his attractive countenance, a sadness behind which she had perceived a deeply wounded heart. Of that wound Mario had never spoken to her, but the cloud had not passed away, notwithstanding the love that Annella breathed toward him from her eyes, her smile, her entire personality. And then, too, there was something else that she would have wished—indeed, she expected it every evening, and always vainly—the final outburst of Mario's love. He loved her—oh! she was sure of that—but why did he not tell her so? Of course, natural timidity—the fear of troubling her simple life. He was so noble, her Mario! But finally he must explain himself. Oh! and she would not stammer, in giving him a favorable answer; such a *yes* would escape her lips—and then what mutual joy, what warmth in their future talks! Then she would be obliged to tell it to her cousin, and the kind countess would willingly consent. But why did he not speak to her?

One evening when they were alone in the shadow of the little yellow drawing-room, Mario suddenly let himself go, seized her trembling hand and murmured to her: "I will—I must speak to you—at last!"

And Annella, bending her fair head and almost suffocated with emotion, replied: "I am listening to you!"

"Dear Annella," Mario began, "have you never asked yourself why I first came to this house?"

"How should I? Chance, perhaps," murmured Annella, hardly able to contain her joy, while her heart cried out the answer, "For me, for me alone!"

"It was not a chance, no—I came here conquered, led by passion alone. I loved and was wild with pain before I set foot inside the house," declared Mario.

Annella trembled, not daring to interrupt him; but she would have liked to fling herself upon his neck without letting him finish, and to say to him amid a world of kisses, "Here is joy for you!" But he continued: "I loved, and to-day I love more than then; I suffered, and to-day I suffer more than ever."

The girl started and looked, wide-eyed, at his face. Why did he speak of suffering? Had he not understood her great love? Or was he feigning, perhaps, in order to hear her confess it?

"Dear girl," and here Mario caressed her hand, "you, indeed, have comforted me, you have helped me to bear my grief; but now my anguish has reached the last degree—I know that my love will never be returned."

"No, no, you mistake!" Annella involuntarily interrupted, bending toward him.

"I mistake?" he exclaimed, with hope beaming in his glance. "Why do you say so? Do you know who it is that I love?"

And Annella, shame-faced and confused, stammered, "I imagine."

"Well," continued Mario, bitterly, "if you know whom I love, you will have seen for some time that she not only does not even dream of this tempest in my soul, but she would never imagine that one so low would dare to lift his eyes to her."

What! was he going mad? Why did he talk of descending? And the girl, profoundly troubled, asked him quickly: "She! Who!"

"Your cousin, the countess, of course."

"Do you love her? Her!" And Annella could say no more. She felt a chill like ice through her veins, a ringing in her ears; she saw sparks, shadows, before her eyes—then nothing.

When she came to herself she was upon her bed, with the beautiful countess bending a little uneasily over her.

"Oh, what was the matter?" asked the countess; "have you quarrelled this evening?"

"With whom?" said Annella, not yet quite herself.

"With Mario, with your impassioned Mario, who I hope, will decide to ask me for your hand."

"Ah!" exclaimed the poor girl, "Mario loves only you."

"Me!" replied the countess, with a haughty mien. "What a stupid man!" And she went to the mirror to arrange the corsage of the scarlet gown that set off the marble whiteness of her perfect shoulders.

Annella buried her face in the pillow, and drenched it with scalding tears.

THE MOURNER'S HORSE

BY ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH

This sketch tells of the dilemma in which a substitute at a funeral finds himself, and the difficulty he experienced in getting away from the house of mourning owing to his sublime ignorance of horseflesh. From *The Speaker*.

Recently on my way across the downs, I overtook the national schoolmaster and walked some little distance with him discussing free education and what would come of it. The schoolmaster is town-bred—a thin, clean-shaven man, whose black habit and tall hat, though considerably bronzed, refuse to harmonize with the scenery amid which they move. His speech is formal and slightly dogmatic. On the subject of free education he talked with angry positiveness, as one acquainted with the facts. His cold eyes sparkled behind his spectacles, and, tucking his umbrella tightly under his arm-pit, he ticked off his arguments, tapping his right fore-finger on the palm of his left hand.

Thus occupied, we were passing the wall of a farm-house on the edge of the downs, when an ugly sheep-dog—a grizzled, tailless brute—came leaping over it and flew at our legs.

I had wheeled round and my ash-sapling was lifted for a blow when the schoolmaster arrested me with a peal of horrible, discordant laughter. He was crouching, with a hand on either thigh, and his spectacles almost on a level with the dog's jaws. His hat had shifted to the back of his head, and the look of derision on his face was something devilish. At intervals of about three seconds he flung a yell of unnatural mirth straight in the dog's face. Down went the brute's tail, and he slunk round and back over the wall, rubbing his belly on the coping in his abject discomfiture.

The schoolmaster straightened himself and resumed his sombre respectability at once. I stared back on the empty road without speaking. The man's impish outburst, to tell the truth, had startled me not a little. I saw its success, of course, but somehow it had been too well done; and I wondered if he would take up his argument again.

Instead, he chuckled drily after a moment and began:

"That's a better weapon than a gun."

"Ridicule?"

He nodded.

"You used it uncommonly well," said I.

"Oh, it's easy. The test of any creature—man or dog—is, Can he parry it? I never met one that could. You see, every living being has some secret shame: man or dog, we all pretend to be what we are not. It is all very well to say 'like to the crackling of thorns under a pot,' but the point is that we're all *in* the pot, and liable to be cooked."

He walked on a dozen steps, and resumed, in a tone altogether lighter:

"I'll tell you a tale on this point that may amuse you at my expense. I am London-bred, as you know—a Cockney in the grain to this day, though when I came down here to teach school I was barely twenty, and now I'm fifty-six. 'Twas during the summer holidays that I first set foot in the neighborhood, a week before school opened again. I came early, to look for lodgings and find out a little about the people and settle down a bit before beginning work.

"The vicar—the late vicar—commended me to the farmhouse we have just passed. It was occupied in those days by an old farmer called Retallack, a widower and childless. His sister, Miss Jane Ann, kept house for him; and these were the only two souls on the premises till I came and was boarded by them for thirteen shillings a week. For that price they let me have a bedroom, a fair-sized sitting-room, and as much as I could eat.

"A month after I arrived, Farmer Retallack was put to bed with a bad attack of colic. This was on a Wednesday, and on Saturday morning Miss Jane Ann came to my door with a message that the old man would like to see me. So I went to his room and found him propped up in the bed with pillows and looking very yellow in the gills, though clearly convalescent.

"'Schoolmaster,' said he, 'I've summat of a favor to beg o' ye. You give the children a half-holiday, Saturdays—hey? Well, dy'e think ye could drive the brown hoss into 'Tergarrick this afternoon? 'Fact is, my old friend Abe Walters, that kept The Packhorse, is lyin' dead, an' they bury en at half-after-three to-day. I'd be main glad to attend the feast an' tell Missus Walters how much deceased 'll be missed, but I might so well try to fly. Now if you could attend an' just pass the word that I'm laid on my back with

colic, but that you've come to show respect i' my place—There 'll be lashins o' vittles an' drink: no Walters was ever interred under a kilderkin, exceptin' their second child that died in teethin'—an' *he* took a nine-gallon cask, besides port an' sherry wine to an uncertain amount. I had that from the mother.'

"Now the fact was, I had never driven a horse in my life and hardly knew (as they say) a horse's head from his tail till he began to move. But that is just the sort of ignorance no young man will confess to. So I answered that I was engaged that evening. We were just organizing night-classes for the young men of the parish, and the vicar was to open the first, with a short address, at half-past six.

"'You'll be back in loads o' time,' the farmer assured me.

"'To tell you the truth,' said I, 'I'm not accustomed to drive much.'

"He declared that it was impossible to come to grief on the way, the brown horse being quiet as a lamb and knowing every stone of the road by heart. And the end was that I consented. The brown horse was harnessed by the farm boy and led round with the gig while Miss Jane Ann and I were finishing our midday meal. And I drove off alone in a black suit, and with my heart in my mouth.

"The brown horse, as the farmer had promised, was quiet as a lamb. He went forward at a steady jog, and even had the good sense to quarter on his own account for the one or two vehicles we met on the broad road. Pretty soon I began to experiment gingerly with the reins, and, by the time we reached Tergarrick streets, was handling them with quite an air, while observing the face of every one I met, to make sure I was not being laughed at. The prospect of Tergarrick Fore Street frightened me a good deal, and there was a sharp corner to turn at the entrance of the inn-yard. But the old horse knew his business so well that had I pulled on one rein with all my strength I believe it would have merely annoyed, without affecting him. He took me into the yard without a mistake, and I gave up the reins to the ostler, thanking Heaven and looking careless.

"The inn was crowded with mourners, eating and drinking and discussing the dead man's virtues. The assembly-room at the back, where the subscription dances were held, was filled with a suffocating crowd, a reek of hot joints, and the

clicking of knives and forks. I caught sight of the widow moving up and down before a long table and shedding tears while she changed her guests' plates. She heard my message, and, welcoming me with effusion, hurried away to put on her bonnet for the funeral.

"More than an hour later, I hurried back from the churchyard to the inn and told the ostler to put my horse in the gig. The funeral was over and I had not much time to spare.

"‘I beg your pardon, sir,’ the ostler said, ‘but I’m new to this place. Which *is* your horse?’

"‘Oh,’ I answered, ‘he’s a brown. You’ll know him easily enough.’

"The man returned in about five minutes. ‘There’s six brown hosses in the stable, sir. Would ‘ee mind comin’ an’ pickin’ out yourn?’

"I followed him with a sense of coming evil. Sure enough, there were six brown horses in the big stable, and to save my life I couldn’t tell which was mine. Of any difference between horses, except that of color, I’d no idea. I scanned them all anxiously, and felt the ostler’s eye upon me. I had an impulse to confide my difficulty to him, but reflected that this wouldn’t help me in the least. After a minute, pulling out my watch carelessly, I said:

"‘By George, I’d no idea it was so early! Never mind. I won’t start for a few minutes yet.’

"This was the only course—to wait until the other five owners of brown horses had driven home. I went back to the inn and talked and drank sherry, watching the crowd thin by degrees and speeding the lingering mourners with all my prayers. The time dragged on till nothing short of a miracle could take me back in time for the night-class. The widow came and talked to me. I answered her at random.

"Twice I revisited the stable, and the last time found but three brown horses left. I went back and consumed more sherry and biscuits. Ten more minutes passed, and there were left only the widow herself and a trio of elderly men. As I hung about trying to look unbounded sympathy at the group, it dawned on me that they were beginning to eye me uneasily. I took a sponge cake and another glass of wine. One of the men—who wore a high stock and an edging of stiff gray hair around his bald head—advanced to me.

"‘This funeral,’ said he, ‘is over.’

“‘Yes, yes,’ I stammered, and choked over a sip of sherry.

“‘We are waiting—let me tap you on the back—we are waiting to read the will.’

“I rushed out of the room and down to the stables. The ostler was harnessing the one brown horse that remained. ‘I was thinkin’ you wouldn’t be long, sir,’ he said; ‘you’re the very last, ‘a b’lieve, an’ here ends a hard day’s work.’

“I drove off. It was nearly seven by this, but I didn’t even think of the night-class. I was wondering if the horse I drove were really Farmer Retallack’s. Somehow—whether because his feed of corn pricked him, or no, I can’t say—he was a deal more lively than on the outward journey. I looked at him narrowly and began to feel sure it was another horse. In spite of the cool evening a sweat broke out upon me.

“Reaching home, I found the farmer dressed and leaning on a stick in the doorway.

“‘Lor’ bless my soul,’ he hailed me, ‘I’ve been that worried about ye, I could’n stay in bed. The parson’s been up twice from the school-house to make inquiries. Where, in the name o’ goodness——’

“‘That’s a long story,’ said I; and then, feigning to speak carelessly, though I heard my heart go thump: ‘How d’ye think the brown horse looks after the journey?’

“‘Oh, *he’s* right enough,’ the old man replied indifferently. ‘It ’d take a lot to hurt *he*. But——’

“But I had never felt so glad in my life. ’

ETCHING: DEATH OF A FLOWER

BY BELLE HUNT

A touching story of the streets, told with rare skill and artistic effect.

She was not old in years, but in suffering and experience very, very old. Her face was small and pinched, and her eyes had something in them she never would be able to say. She carried a baby in her arms, a smaller, more pinched edition of herself, whose little sallow face hung over her shoulder like a wilted narcissus, and whose prescient, old eyes stared stolid contempt upon a world whose hollow shell they had long since penetrated. She always stopped near a flower-stand just outside a large shop—stopped and sniffed the flowers, stationing herself on one side or the other according as the wind blew. She turned the baby's head so it could smell them too, smiling wanly into its non-committal little face.

One day she came nearer—quite up to the stand—and laid a penny in front of the old woman who kept the stand.

"It is to pay fur the smells," she said; "they do me a sight uv good, and baby he likes 'em, too. See him wag his head! He's powerful knowin', ef he is so leetle fur his age."

"I don't charge you nothing for smelling the flowers," said the old woman, kindly. "Take back your penny."

"No; I'll not come agin ef you don't take it."

Here some ladies stopped to buy flowers, and she moved away, the flower-woman putting a yesterday's pink in the claw of the baby, which it clutched tightly, but looked on, unmoved, at the passing folly of life.

Then she did not come for a week. It was raining when she returned, and she was alone. She stood some distance from the stand, and looked very solemn, more like the baby than she had ever looked. At last she drew nearer, shivering, and huddling her face away in her shawl.

"Too wet for the little one, eh?" asked the flower-woman.

She shook her head. "He's wet, too," she said; "this here rain is pourin' on him, an' it makes me hurt, ef he don't know nothin' about it."

She drew from the shawl a tiny red woollen stocking, from which she emptied nine pennies into her little blue palm.

"Give me all they'll buy," she said, "white uns—he's dead. Them wus his pennies I wus savin' up—fur him."

THE INVOLUNTARY JOURNEY

BY HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE

Famous Story Series

The Involuntary Journey, though lacking the power and depth of some of Zschokke's other stories, is so charming a tale and so brilliant an example of his easy, graceful style and remarkable equipment as a writer of romance that we gladly give it place in our reproduction of famous stories. Translated from the German for Putnam's Library of Choice Reading by F. B. G.

That the first of the following letters may be better understood, I must make known that the writer and his sister were invited by the Countess Amelia von St——y, on the 20th of January, 1807, to a ball at her palace in Warsaw. They went thither and had a merry evening, although the joy that shone on the faces of all came not from the heart. For Warsaw at that time was full of alarm and of Frenchmen, and a week had scarcely elapsed since the transitory regency had been appointed, at whose head stood the brave but much injured Malachosky.

The Countess of St——y was as beautiful as an angel that night. A magnificent necklace of pearls glittered around her neck. It was the New Year's present of her uncle.

The writer's sister had received a similar New Year's gift, but had neglected putting it on. The young rivals soon entered into a dispute as to which was the most beautiful necklace, each wishing that her own should bear away the triumph. The upshot of it was that both commanded the writer of these letters to go immediately and bring the missing necklace. His sister having given him the key of her jewelry box, he ordered his coach and hastened home.

FIRST LETTER.

BLONIE, 21st January, 1807.

MY DEAR COUNTESS:

By all the Graces, among whom you stand the first, I beg that you will not be angry with me. Instead of bringing you Sophia's necklace yesterday, I carried it to Blonie. But to-day I return to Warsaw, and this evening I shall lay it at your feet. I make use of a tedious hour to send you my excuses by a courier who hastens to Warsaw. You will certainly declare my offence unpardonable in having postponed your

yesterday's triumph, and will think it can never be atoned for. But I beg you to have mercy enough to deign to glance at these lines, and you will have compassion on the offender, who only sinned toward you for friendship's sake.

Yesterday I had put up Sophia's necklace, and was on the point of stepping into the carriage to return to you, at the ball to which your beauty gave the greatest charm, when my servant announced a French officer. I was obliged to receive him. He brought me a letter. Only think, they were the first lines I had received for twelve years from the only dear friend of my youth, noble Felix L——y, who has during that time been in all Napoleon's campaigns, and now stands at the head of the Polish regiment. He wrote me but a few words: "I have just arrived at Blonie, and learn, my dear Joseph, that thou yet livest. My hopes of embracing thee in Warsaw are frustrated, now that I stand almost before the gates of the dear city. I come from Posa, and here I find a courier from the army with commands to hasten immediately to Thorn. If it is possible, come immediately to Blonie, where I shall rest at least several hours. Who knows whether we shall ever approach each other again so nearly in this world! We have so much to say to each other! Early in the morning I shall travel onward."

Will you now blame me, dear countess, for taking advantage of the important moment? To think of seeing a dear friend from whom I had been so long separated! I begged the officer to take a seat in my carriage, letting his horses follow. I then threw my cloak around me, and thus, instead of going to the temple of love, I went to the feast of friendship.

After a shocking ride, for the road was wretched and the night pitch-dark, I arrived at Blonie, and my Felix was already at Sochazew, where some French generals were awaiting him. But he left a note for me, begging that I would follow him to Sochazew, where he would wait for me at all events. Now that I have come this far, for his sake, I will even go a few miles farther. But everything goes wrong. One of my horses was lamed last night, and I must take the post, and I must wait until the postman finds horses, for his are all in use now. But they give me hope of departing in one hour. Farewell, lovely one. This evening I shall kiss your hands.

Your true

COUNT OF W.

SECOND LETTER.

KUTNO, January 23d.

In truth, my most gracious, you will not be less astonished, on opening this letter, to find that I write from Kutno, than I am astonished at being here. Fate will make me a liar toward you, and I am inconsolable. What will you think of me? And yet I am the most innocent man under the sun.

The only thing in my adventure that pleases me is that happily I overtook Felix at Sochazew. We embraced each other with mute ardor; an overwhelming sweet sorrow suddenly seized us; and it seemed to me as if in another world I again held to my heart a loved one who had long since died.

You must have known him. The Fire-brains has become quite sedate. Egyptian and Spanish suns have browned his face finely, and the slash on the forehead, over the left eye, that he carried away from a battle, to the honor of a Calabrian sword, is so becoming that he would make me jealous, were I to know that he were quartered near you at Warsaw.

I intend when I am with you to relate to you the whole story of his military expeditions, and that will be day after to-morrow. Heavens, how men are thrown about to all corners of the earth in these days! It is the general wandering time of nations, and no one can say whether he shall eat his last mouthful in Europe or America, Asia or Africa. Felix was attached to the general's staff for a long time, but now he commands his own regiment. He believes that he is destined to the corps of General Lannes, and asserts that Napoleon will be in St. Petersburg next summer, particularly now that the Turks have shown themselves by no means indifferent, and have declared war. This much is certain: that the Russian ambassdor has left Constantinople. The French generals that Felix found in Sochazew assured him that, since the battle at Pultusk and Golomyn, the French arms had been masters in a far bloodier day at Ostralenska.

But enough of politics. You will be much more curious to know how, instead of being in Warsaw, I have finally arrived in this most pitiful little city. Only listen. He that has felt the damage must not mind the ridicule. You will laugh heartily, and nothing will remain for me to do but to laugh also, notwithstanding that I have the greatest inclination to doubt whether I am not even now with you.

We remained together in Sochazew till late in the evening before we separated for heaven knows how long! As I could not count upon obtaining post-horses in a short time, and as I wished to return immediately to Warsaw, notwithstanding my fatigue, that I might make atonement to you, Felix was kind enough to use his military power to procure me a conveyance that would take me to Blonie. A chaise appeared, which was harnessed to three fine nags. I again pressed the noble Felix to my heart; he rode off, and I soon did the same.

Being wearied with the journey of the night before, in which I had not closed an eye, and also with the affairs of the day, I protected myself from the snowstorm by drawing the curtains of the chaise. I then wrapped my cloak about me, squeezed myself into a corner of the carriage, and went to sleep, in spite of its jolting. It was a happy thought of mine, that of putting on a great-coat over my ball dress. My feet, being only covered with silk stockings and slippers, were sheltered by a whole load of hay.

I slept uneasily, but my dreams were pleasant, for they were of you. Oh, how lovely, how kind the god of Fancy made you! What blessed words did I read in your eyes! My soul was with yours, I knew what you felt, and yet I felt unspeakably more than you. Oh, that it should only be a dream! Did you but know, enchanting Amelia, what a heaven you have to dispense, you would not act otherwise in reality than you did in my dreams!

No matter how often I was startled from my Elysium by the merciless blows on my head or on my ribs, yet I always shut my heavy eyes properly, and it was always you who led me back again to that lost Elysium. As soon as I had aroused myself from this enchanting sleep, I remarked with affright that it was already morning, and I had counted upon being in Blonie shortly after midnight. I tore back the curtains of the chaise, and saw that we were entering a city that I had not had the honor of seeing before. "Where are we?" I asked the driver.

"In Kutno," said the fellow drily, and kept on his way.

"In Kutno!" I exclaimed, out of my senses with rage. "Does the evil one possess you to drag me to Kutno? I will go to Blonie, to Blonie!"

The villain behaved as if he had no ears, and kept on, stopping finally at an inn. I got out, it is true, for my whole

body was stiff; but I felt the greatest temptation to cudgel the rascal in the street.

He maintained, in the mean time, that the French officer who ordered him to go had named Kutno to him; at least he had understood it so. On this he insisted, and, whipping his tired horses, he hurried away.

I ascertained from the innkeeper that my wicked coachman had been absent from Kutno, where he lived, for eight days, upon requisition probably (it being the custom with the military to drive about the world dealing blows and hunger), and he had now probably taken advantage of the night to come home with his wagon, particularly as he saw that I was a Pole, and neither an officer nor a Frenchman.

This information, which my knowing host gave me so candidly, might be true, but it did me no good. I now sat in Kutno, and was not in Warsaw, nor even in Blonie. The innkeeper comforted me with a miserable breakfast, and with the hope that an opportunity would be found to take me back again to Sochazew. He gave himself a great deal of trouble to procure me a wagon. I myself ran over the miry little city in my silk stockings, and had my labor for my pains. Everything had been seized for the service of the army. I even humbled myself so much as to seek out the rascal who had brought me to Kutno. In my distress I forgave him all his sins, and, holding up a purse, begged him to take me back to Sochazew. But he declared that his horses and carriages had been taken from him that same morning. On the contrary, my sagacious host thought that the wicked knave had hid his carriage in some safe place, so that it should not be put in requisition again.

To-day, however, I struck a bargain with a French engineer officer, who is quartered on my host. He travels to Kladova; I accompany him there, and then he gives me the wagon, with the power of using it as a requisition wagon as far as Sochazew, and even to Blonie or Warsaw, if I will. To make the matter more certain, I have not only acquainted the driver with our contract, but also that I shall not use it as a requisition wagon, but shall pay him well as far as I use it. So, in the worst of weathers, I must first go to Kladova, then be brought back to Kutno to get a carriage. For if I do not accompany the carriage to Kladova, I run the danger of losing it altogether.

The misery in this land is indescribable. Our deliverers make us pay dear for our enfranchisement. Money will hardly find a man bread.

But I must close, else I shall lose the current post. Oh, how I envy this happy sheet, that will be within your room two days sooner than I can! At the same time with this letter, I send one to my sister, to whom I wrote yesterday. Calm the dear girl, and say to her that, positively, I shall be in Warsaw day after to-morrow.

Adieu! I am almost dying with impatience to see you again. More than once yesterday I was on the point of running back to Warsaw, through snow and mud, in my dancing-shoes. But my reason was kind enough to make my homesickness the apposite remark that I should have eighteen or nineteen miles to run.

Fare you well! May you feel the warm kiss that I spiritually press upon your hand!

THIRD LETTER.

POSEN, January 26th.

I am certainly bewitched. I now believe in all possible enchantments, whereas I have never believed in any but that of your charms until now. Now I doubt no longer the power of hobgoblins and of malicious spirits. To-day I would, should have been in Warsaw, in your boudoir, and at the feet of you whom I adore. But misfortunes multiply and bring me to Posen, to which I may add that I made my entrance as a prisoner. Do not be frightened. I stand already on my free feet.

I feel as one does in a nightmare. The faster I would go forward, the farther I find myself behind. Since man was born, has a child of man never had the unlucky chance, as I have, of leaving a ball for a pearly necklace, and then be driven out forty miles into the wide world? All my longings, my impatience, or eagerness, my wisdom, my foresight, have been of no use to me, but to bring me backward, still farther backward; as the storm at sea drives the most skilful and active sailor far from the port for which he strives.

Day before yesterday, the engineer and I rode together to Kladova, as we had proposed. In this miserable nest there was a sort of governor to whom the engineer announced himself immediately after his arrival. There he found orders

to go to Sempolno without delay. He came back and told me the misfortune, shrugging his shoulders, and with a million of regrets at not being able to keep his word; but the service must have precedence over everything else. I became almost speechless with horror. I begged, raved, placed my distress before him—all was in vain. He shrugged his shoulders and would go to Sempolno. While the groom was feeding the horses, the engineer ran to the governor, and accompanied by soldiers, visited stalls and stables, to procure another conveyance. I followed him, but we could find nothing but a large dirt cart.

To keep possession of my wagon, I resolved to travel in it myself to Sempolno, where I had the hope of obtaining, far more easily, another relay of horses and more endurable inns than in the wretched, dirty town of Kladova. The engineer approved of my determination. But I was out of temper, and on the journey we were neither of us so friendly and talkative as before. Yes, there were even disagreeable altercations, and in Sempolno we coldly separated from each other.

I was so much the more friendly toward my coachman. We concluded to stay over night in order to let the horses rest, and to journey back at the very earliest moment the next day. My generosity increased, and as a reward I sat at break of day in the wagon with my face toward Warsaw.

We were scarcely half an hour's ride from Sempolno, when we saw three French *chasseurs* running after us at full speed. My driver, full of apprehensions and forebodings, whipped his horses with all his strength. I thought his distress was as superfluous as his haste was fruitless. The French soon reached us, ordered us to stop, and cursed the driver, who, as they said, had stolen away from the requisition without due permission. They commanded him to turn back, and even talked of shooting. My Phaeton did not comprehend a word, but he understood the pantomime of the "conquerors of the world," and cast a piteous glance on me. I now interfered. This the fellows seemed to have expected, and, turning to me, they inquired with much politeness who I was, and then inquired for my passport. I had none. In the most agreeable phrases they remarked that I was a suspicious person, and hoped I would have the goodness to make myself known to the governor of the city.

The polite clowns, who now turned the wagon and horses

about without further ceremony, were, without doubt, fully convinced of my innocence. The governor, as soon as he understood that I had procured one of the requisition carriages in a deceitful manner and had not even a passport for myself, first declared me a suspicious person, secondly an enemy of Napoleon, and thirdly a prisoner. For my consolation, the objections that I made to this helped to send me to headquarters in order to give my justification; and two hours afterward I had the honor of going to Posen, in the company of a corporal and a lieutenant, though not by my wish did they go thither, or rather, ride.

So long as we suffer from the little annoyances and unexpected provocations of fate, we easily lose patience, probably because we always hope to overcome them; but when misery comes too palpably, we are merry again, for man, when he sees himself conquered, and feels that all resistance is vain, turns to his native pride, and, while he fears naught, despises all things.

Thus the vexations of the preceding days made me as angry then, as it now appears amusing to me to go as a prisoner (in ball dress, it is true) to Posen, and be kicked on to the very borders of Poland. In fact, my misfortune is not so very great, and I am certain that you will laugh as heartily over my adventures as I do myself. I have nothing to regret, my amiable countess, but the loss of the moments that I might live in your presence. You now see what a misfortune can be brought about through a strife between two beautiful women. Sophia's necklace must bear all the blame, and yet it drives about the world with me.

I am now truly happy to be in Posen. I was very kindly received at headquarters. They made many excuses on the score of strictness in the service, and could not refrain from laughing at the merciless caprice of destiny which had brought me, in the midst of winter, from a ballroom in the capital, to the tumult of war on the borders. My first business here is to equip myself anew, for I look wretchedly. I shall no longer rely upon a requisition coach, for I have bought myself a fine riding-horse that is to carry me back to you. I am having a warm travelling-coat made, whose military cut will produce a sensation among the commanding corporals of the world-conquerors. And I have also a passport, by means of which I shall reach your ante-chamber without hindrance.

Nothing keeps me now from flying to your feet, but the tailor and shoemaker. I cannot come away before day after to-morrow, that I see. We poor mortals are most dependent in the smallest matters.

Time is tediously long to me, and I have already had quite enough of the warlike tumult that reigns here, the hundreds of different uniforms, and the marching backward and forward of troops. It is one of the most remarkable contradictions in enigmatical mankind, that the whole world dreads war as the greatest trouble of life, the world detests toil, and fears death; and yet gives itself willingly in a thousand ways to war, toil, and death.

My only enjoyment is in thinking of you, in conversing with you, unfortunately in thought alone!—to admire you now in the dance, now at the piano, now at the toilet, now in the charming negligence of domestic life, now as the queen of beauty in that enchantment which nature and art shed around you.

Postscript of the 28th of January.—I could not send this letter to the post till to-day. I am ready to travel, and early to-morrow I take myself away. I travel in the company of several Polish and French officers who are well known to me. Say to my sister that I shall certainly arrive in Warsaw on Tuesday.

FOURTH LETTER.

MAGDEBURG, April 2d.

Heavens knows, my dear countess, whether you have received the letter that I scribbled to you with a pencil from Dresden; and Heavens knows whether you will ever receive these lines! I will therefore repeat in few words what I wrote from Dresden, and renew my request, that you use all your influence, combined with that of my relations, with our government, and also with the French authorities, that I may receive my freedom.

I have already made known to you that when some miles from Posen, between Schwersens and Kostrzyn, we were very unexpectedly attacked by a heavy body of Prussians, surrounded, and made prisoners. Of the Frenchmen in whose company I was riding, one officer and one soldier lost their lives. We were all plundered, and I only saved myself from ill-treatment by saying to the Prussian commander, in the

German language, that I was no soldier, but merely a travelling citizen who had been thrown among the French by chance. My passport, which confirmed my declarations, and the announcement which I wisely made, in my trepidation, that, far from making one of the French party, I was a Prussian subject, and longed for nothing more than emancipation of Poland from the French deluge, did me great service.

The Prussian officer was a humane man. When I told him, in answer to his questions concerning the number of troops in Posen, that without doubt several regiments would that same day take the road to Warsaw, he determined immediately to retire into Silesia, but signified to me that he could not set me free that moment, because his own position forbade it.

Without being treated as a prisoner, yet I was the same as a prisoner. After several days' travel on miserable roads, we arrived in Silesia by passing over the Warta, half starved and half frozen. Neither complaining nor laughing did me any good. I hid Sophia's necklace as cautiously as I could, together with my little money, for I much distrusted the fortunes of war; and I did wisely. Our commander, who bore the title of major, claimed me on the following day to serve as a true Prussian subject under the banner of the king. It was impossible for me to reject this honorable offer without either injuring my character or having my patriotism suspected. I therefore did the service of an adjutant, in the character of a lieutenant, longing with impatience for a convenient opportunity to get rid of it. The deeper we penetrated into Silesia, the lower my courage sunk.

We suffered unspeakably from frost, snow, and want of provisions. Wherever we went, we were obliged to take what we needed by force. Our prisoners of war, who were still driving about with us, were the most to be pitied. Notwithstanding this, the Poles, whose hard fate I most wished to relieve, declined my attentions proudly and indignantly. I read in the eyes of my countrymen that they took me for a betrayer, and this reproach was more painful to me than all the other miseries. I also felt soon enough the effects of their hate.

The major turned his troops toward Golgau, but we had not reached the place when, one morning, as our companies were taking their stand for marching out of a village, some

French hussars rode up. They started at seeing us, and quickly retreated. As we marched out of the village, we were attacked and surrounded by a squadron of light French cavalry. This gave our commander no fear, but we were soon encompassed by several companies of infantry. We had fallen into a column of the Vendéean body of the army, and our bravery was useless. The Prussians fought with unexampled courage, and even won two of the field-pieces with which we had been shot at. Notwithstanding, the end of the play was that we were beaten, and forced by their superior power to surrender. On our side, we had several killed and many wounded.

None were so happy as the French and Polish prisoners who had been liberated by the fight. The Poles immediately pointed me out to the French general, as a renegade Pole and an enemy to the French, who had betrayed them into the hands of the Prussians into whose service I immediately went. As the Prussian major named me as his lieutenant in counting out the prisoners to the victors, and called me a volunteer, he did not aid me in my justification. The passport from Posen only added to my guilt, and my horse, watch, and money were good booty for the world-conquerors. I was obliged to wade through snow and mire, on foot, with the other prisoners, by the way of Liegnitz to Dresden.

Here I wrote to you of my misfortune. In Dresden we rested several days, and then, with a number of other prisoners, we came through Leipsic here to Magdeburg. It is now eight days that I have been in this fortress. The inhabitants show much pity and kindness toward us, at the same time that they are to be pitied in the highest degree themselves. In no place have I seen the people so cast down as in this city. They all detest the French, the citizens adhere with ardor to their unfortunate king, and they do not give up the hope of yet seeing the Prussian eagle upon their ramparts.

As far as I can see, unless my cause is pursued in Warsaw with untiring zeal, I must remain a prisoner till the end of the war. My well-hidden store of money begins to melt down. At all events, I beg of my dear sister, in the enclosed note, to send me a remittance to the subjoined address.

The governor is an obliging man. I had an opportunity of telling him my confounded adventures from beginning to end. He found them so curious that he laughed continually,

and would scarcely believe me. He is personally well acquainted with my friend Felix. As to giving me my freedom, that, he says, is quite out of his power, and refers me to bitter patience. In the mean time he has told me to forward a letter to Felix, as well as this letter to you.

This joke of fate is almost too harsh to be amusing, but my despair would be useless. I am therefore as merry as I can be under the circumstances, and my health is inexhaustible. So you must be quiet on my account, and comfort my good Sophia. I shall now count the days, the hours, the minutes, till I receive an answer from you. When I see a line from you, it will seem as if I saw yourself, etc.

FIFTH LETTER.

NANCY, May 20th.

Joy! my affairs are going on excellently. My magical star, or rather my evil star, I believe, will finally take me unexpectedly to Paris, to Lisbon, St. Domingo, Otaheite, the Tropics, the Esquimaux, the Hottentots, over Asia, to the small-footed Chinese, past the pious children of the Brahmas, and through the Persian gardens back to Warsaw. I have no doubt about the matter; my affairs are going on excellently well, notwithstanding I always wished that they would come to a stand. I am already in France. It is not farther to Lisbon than to Warsaw; and if I am once in Lisbon, what is it to me whether I go to you through Asia or Europe?

But neither the German maidens (and yet there are some lovely faces among them), nor the French ladies, nor the Spanish, nor the voluptuous beauties of the Friendly Islands can make me faithless to you. So far as I have already gone, I have nowhere seen so many charms, such grace and dignity, as I left at the ball at Warsaw. Ah! if I had but one line from you!

Who knows but that the letters for me are lying now in Magdeburg, both from you and Sophia? And who knows in Magdeburg where I am stuck? After my letter was despatched to you, I was taken away with a great multitude of other prisoners of war. It was said that we were to go to Mayence; in Mayence we were told that Lyons was our destination; and when we are in Lyons, what will then be our destination?

The host of prisoners with whom I came over the Rhine is scattered into a hundred portions. They go to all parts

of the world. As I said before, I do not now doubt a moment but that I must go round the world. Were I only in Thibet with the Lama, or with the Prophet at Mecca, or on the Caspian Sea, I would make a jubilee, for I should then be returning to you.

What miserable creatures we are! We are like ants, whose houses are destroyed by the uncertain tread of a horse; like insects, which the storm-wind carries away, and then deposits in distant lands. Why am I in Nancy? What is the war to me?

I send you these lines that you may not fear, at least for my life. Good heavens! It seems as though I had been absent from you twenty years. How many countries, mountains, streams, nations, lie between us!

No one can be certain that I shall not yet have the honor of being your Antipode. Ah, my charming Antipode, what then would become of life? How easily you might die under my feet, without my knowing a word about the matter! If you lived for another, would you not be dead for me? I say to myself, I have never yet read of two Antipodes loving each other faithfully.

Since we captured heroes wander on this side of the Rhine, they allow us many more liberties than on German soil. I can go where I will, if I only show myself to the commander at the proper hour. I can live, eat, and drink as suits my pleasure, with my own money—that is understood.

When I rode to your ball would I had but taken out more than the usual amount of gambling money, such as I have spent—I believe for these twenty years!

Next month I shall write to you again, and it shall be from the place I hope to keep within till peace, and where I can await answers from Warsaw. But probably, my beautiful Antipode, I shall send you my first letter from the island of Teneriffe or Madagascar. Adieu.

SIXTH LETTER.

AIX, June 27th.

Finally I have reached my goal. I am destined to remain here till an exchange of prisoners, or until peace is announced. This information has been more painful to me than I had at first expected. To be hustled from Warsaw to the Spanish borders is truly no small matter. I shall therefore neither

see Otaheite nor the East Indies, notwithstanding there is in all probability much more to see there than in these deserts on the Adour.

All the French that I have seen in Poland cursed my fatherland. I can sincerely give it all back to them in their own. What a miserable, barren, flat, beggarly country theirs is! I strongly suspect that the French government carries on the war that it may people these immense solitudes. There are almost as many prisoners of war as inhabitants here.

This little town has almost fallen to the ground, but my host prides himself not a little upon its great antiquity. It is a pleasure that I will give up to him. He has a young daughter who appears to me much prettier than the oldest town. And he recommends the warm baths of the city to me as a great luxury, believing there never were such miraculous baths in the whole world. But the man is a born fool—warm baths while the weather is hot enough already to suffocate one! I am burnt as black by the sun as a mulatto, and I can scarcely comprehend how the young maiden of this old city has preserved such a dazzling, pure hand.

The prisoners are quartered on the citizens; but we receive nothing free but lodging. Everything else is left for us to buy, if we would not starve. My money has come to the dregs. My fortune consists of Sophia's necklace alone, that I should have brought to you at the ball, and that must now be consumed in the neighborhood of the Pyrenees. I hope my good Sophia will bear with patience the present loss of her necklace, and be happy that her ornament can preserve the life of her poor brother from death by hunger and thirst. I have already sold some large diamonds and pearls to a jeweller of the city, but he was not in a position to pay down cash. He was obliged to get the gold from Bayonne, a town about twelve French miles distant from here.

Since then I have again lived very comfortably, kept a servant, taken rides in the neighborhood, received visits, and lightened the fate of my fellow-prisoners. Adieu.

SEVENTH LETTER.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, July 13th.

Te Deum Laudamus! There is peace! Every one comes to congratulate me upon approaching deliverance, and my return home. And in fact, the journey from Aix to Warsaw

needs a felicitation, for I put little trust in my fortune. The French speak of naught but Tilsit, and raise their Napoleon up to the gods. They think that if Julius Cæsar and Alexander the Great lived at the present day, they would scarcely perform the service of adjutant beside the great Napoleon. The mayor of the city asserted, in a speech which he made in honor of the peace, that without doubt Tilsit was on the borders of Asiatic Tartary, and far to the north, and that the left wing of the great army had pushed its advance guard far on to the eternal ice of the North Pole, where no mortal had dared to place his foot before. The good people of Aix (who are called asses) froze at the mere suggestion of the mayor. No doubt after listening to the speech, they had immediate recourse to their warm baths to ward off the polar cold.

I am now awaiting the command to return, as an effect of the Tilsit peace; and still more impatiently a few letters from your beautiful hand, my lovely countess, before I leave.

I shall procure a comfortable and strong travelling-wagon, and as soon as I am free I shall fly over the Rhine with the extra post to the dear Vistula. My servant, an honest fellow of a Gascon, I shall bring with me. He is much attached to me, and bears the great Roman name of Pompey. The strange fellow has no fault but that of chattering incessantly without regard to the subject. He can talk three hours about salt soap. Sometimes I like to be overwhelmed by this ocean of words, that is, when I cannot forget myself in sleep, and would not think, and would tear myself away from my longing for you.

Do not write any answers to this, or any chance letters sent in future. They would arrive too late.

With this letter I send you my journal. It shall be my forerunner, and relate to you my experiences, remarks, and adventures, more circumstantially than I have been able to do till now in my hasty letters. I wrote it in weary moments, and of those I had not a few. You will recognize my inmost thoughts therein, and in the sanctuary of my inmost soul you will always find me your adorer!

Perhaps your eyes weep a tear in pity for the unfortunate on the Adour—perhaps ere you have left off reading and weeping I shall kiss the beautiful tears from your blushing cheeks.

EIGHTH LETTER.

PAMPELONA, July 28th.

MY SWEET COUNTESS:

Take the first good map of Spain, seek there the kingdom of Navarre; in the kingdom of Navarre, the capital, Pampelona, at the foot of the Pyrenees and consider—I am there!

I have an actual hobgoblin of a genius that withdraws me farther from you, when I am most certain in my hopes of soon being with you. The whole world is making peace. I alone must remain at war with the whole world, struggling with alcayades, regidores, procuratores, escrivanos, and heavens knows how many more honorable people. Now that I have passed the Pyrenees (certainly with little good will on my part), a journey may yet be made to Lisbon, Madagascar, Calcutta, Ispahan, and Constantinople. Put no longer any trust in aught that I may write concerning my returning to Warsaw.

I had received your package, enclosing some letters from dear Sophia, from Uncle St——, from my friend W——, and Count S——. Your words had charmed me into the highest heaven—I enjoyed the sweetest reward for past sufferings, when misfortune brought the tipstave of the mayor of Aix to me; the tipstave led me to the mayor; the mayor to the judge; the judge into a room where there were several people, among whom I only knew the jeweller or goldsmith to whom I had sold a good part of the jewels of Sophia's necklace, three weeks before, to pay my travelling expenses. They showed me the precious stones and pearls in a little box, with the question, "whether I acknowledged having truly sold these jewels to the man in Bayonne." They pointed out the goldsmith to me. I examined the stones, recognized them, answered yes, giving them several additional circumstances.

They declared me guilty, sealed up my effects, carried me to Bayonne, gave me a second trial, and asked me in a most innocent manner for the hiding-place of my companions in the robbery. I then learned, for the first time, that a princess of high rank had been plundered by robbers on the highway as she touched the Spanish borders at Trun. I proved my innocence to the judges, by bringing forth the rest of Sophia's necklace, to which the stones and pearls exactly matched.

They clapped their hands, took the necklace from me, put

me in closer confinement, and let me know incidentally that the necklace answered exactly to that described as having been stolen from the princess. Their decision only gave me hopes of getting off with the punishment of the galleys for life if I would procure also a jewelry-box, with ten valuable rings and a diamond cross, belonging to the pillaged lady. I answered all there was to answer.

At the end of a week I was packed on a donkey, and, well bound and well watched, I was led to Pampelona, where the viceroy (as he is called) had imprisoned some of my accomplices. He wanted to see the necklace, and to confront me with the highwaymen.

Let come what may of this absurd affair, I now only write to you that you may know what has become of me. More I cannot write, for I must deliver this letter open to the police, and let it be read, before it goes to you. Console my sister. If I am hung in Spain it is your fault, for sending me from the ball to fetch that wicked necklace. But even on the gallows, I have the honor of being, etc., etc.

NINTH LETTER.

BAYONNE, August 14th.

I hope you have not been anxious on account of my last adventure. I was released on the second day after arriving at Pampelona; for the princess being there, she saw immediately that it was not her necklace which I had. The confronting me with other prisoners, the hanging, and a life in the galleys readily passed away from my mind. Apologies were made to me, and the viceroy even invited me to dinner, and I was presented to the princess.

But the Spanish ground burnt like fire under my feet. The viceroy had me conveyed to Bayonne, on his own equipage. Here I find that my passports are ready for Warsaw, and my chaise brought Pompey from Aix yesterday. Everything is ready for departure.

Whether I shall go forward to Warsaw, or backward through Pampelona, Madrid, Cadiz, Tangiers, and Morocco—that, my adored, I will not decide. Some enchanter must be in love with you, and jealous of me. Beyond all question there is magic in the game. In the natural state of the world, one is not required to go from one street in Warsaw to another, by way of the Pyrenees. But if my enemy bewitches

me into the moon, I shall even love you there. My next letter will probably be dated from Algiers. I am full of resignation.

TENTH LETTER.

WARSAW, October 3d.

I have just recovered from my first rapture of joy in the arms of my dear Sophia—having arrived within the last half-hour. O Amelia! Amelia! I tremble with delight as I announce myself to you in these lines. Let me know when I and my sister may come to you. Amen.

no cover.

SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol. X. No. 4. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* **AUG., 1892**

ANNOUNCEMENT.

A tale by Mrs. A. G. Thompson, of Brooklyn, N. Y., will be printed in the September number of Short Stories as the winner of the prize for the best story of American farm life. For other announcements and information regarding combination subscription offers, see front advertising pages.

AN ARTIST'S HOLIDAY

BY ETHEL KNIGHT MOLLISON

The writer of this sketch has been awarded the prize in the competition for the best pen-picture of everyday life, though happily the sad theme of the story is not an everyday occurrence.

"But you will not be bored; come, like a good fellow," I said to Ralph Dupont, my friend and brother-student in the field of art, one night in June, as we strolled to our lodgings after the play.

"My dear Jack!" he replied, "I do not care for uncultured beauties, as the Welshwomen undoubtedly are, and Llandudno has been done to death by amateurs; besides, I wandered through the whole country four years ago, and, like the man in the song, once was enough for me; so I decline the pleasure of tramping through a stupid country under a broiling sun with even you, old chappie; and you must confess that, to the indolent, your invitation is more kind than attractive."

So I ceased to urge him, and next week left for my holiday in Wales.

Clack, click, click, clack rang the heels of a little peasant's stout leather shoes as she hurried along the immaculate pavement on a hot July day. The sun, beaming upon the narrow street, glinted on her shining shoe buckles and attracted my attention; and here, in the quaint old town of Llandudno, I

found the model I had fruitlessly searched over all Europe for. She was a fitting inhabitant of that Welsh village which stretches between the heads of Great and Little Ormes, and receives a perpetual bath from the restless Irish Sea—not beautiful, yet singularly lovely.

Click, clack, and we drew nearer, a stray lock of golden-brown hair tumbled roguishly from out the white snood beneath her stiff black hat; and placing her basket carefully on the pavement, she raised her symmetrical though sun-kissed hands and replaced the refractory lock: this gave an opportunity to note her features more particularly.

Unlike many heroines, her mouth was small and perhaps a trifle pale, with a sorrowful droop unfitted to youth; a straight little nose, sprinkled here and there with freckles, divided eyes of strange fascination. At first I pronounced them brown, but as I saw her different moods I found a change in their coloring; her lashes, straight, thick, and black, made her dazzling eyes appear much larger than they were, while her brows curved gracefully above.

Click,click, and she had passed; but I had not come for an idle holiday, and I determined to take a copy of the pretty one back to London if it were possible, so turning around I followed her. Past gay arcades and goody stands she hurried; she looked a mere child, yet none of these gaudy wares attracted her; on she sped, her every movement the acme of grace; until we reached the tiny quay toward which the Liverpool boat was steaming.

She paused at last, and I then lit a cigarette and watched her furtively. The cables fastened the gangway in position, and the pleasure-seekers thronged upon the wharf.

Peering expectantly into the crowd stood my little model, her cheeks all rosy with anticipated pleasure, while through the little white teeth, that peeped behind her rosebud mouth, her breath came in feverish pants; her eyes shone, and the slender fingers grasped her basket with nervous tightness; while beneath her muslin bodice her little soft breasts heaved tumultuously. But as one person after another left the quay, her color faded, the quick breaths lingered into sighs, her eyes expressed deep pain, and unnoticed her basket hung on her arm. Yet not until all had departed did she turn, and then in great dejection she trudged slowly away. Her eyes settled into a yellowish-gray tone, and the lashes

caught the tears of anguish that burst from her heart. Leaving the pier, I followed at a discreet distance until we came close to a vine-covered cot inclosed by a tall hedge. In the trim tiny garden sat a shrunken old woman busily spinning, and as the wee gate in the hedge closed after the girl she looked up.

"Well?" was her only greeting, and it expressed a dozen unkind sentiments.

The girl flushed and her eyes looked sadly up. "He has not come," she faltered; "he has been detained; to-morrow may——"

"You are a fool," snarled the crone; "he has deceived you; he will never come back, I say, as I have said times without number."

"Ah, no!" 'Twas a sharp cry that came from the little pale lips. "You do not understand, grandmother; he is a great artist; his time is not his own, but he will come some day to me and little Ralph, whom he has never seen; he will come back to marry me as he promised."

"Ah, child," the harsh voice had softened, "do not waste your heart on a vain hope; he will never come back, the false one: 'tis better you should forget him and wed honest William Jones; he is one in a thousand—none other would marry such as thou, poor child."

Both being unconscious of my presence, I drew nearer. I was strangely interested; a secret force impelled me to listen; I, that had always scorned to be an eavesdropper, now purposely bent behind the hedge and listened intently.

A peal of childish mirth caused me to look up, and running toward the young girl I beheld a bonnie little man who had seen not more than three Christmases, yet whose face was strangely familiar. The girl raised him in her arms and gazed with a tender longing into the child's blue eyes; his little hands clutched a locket at her throat.

"Show Ralphie's dada," he cried, pulling vigorously at the chain.

His mother unclasped it, and opening the locket placed it in the baby hand; then putting him down gently she turned and entered the cottage. The child looked earnestly at the photo inside, then with true childishness shut the case, and, being unable to open it, turned to the old woman, but she took no heed of his entreaty to open "Dada." Glancing up he espied me,

and with perfect confidence came to me holding out his treasure. "Good man, show Ralph his dada," he lisped in the quaint Welsh tongue.

At this the old dame looked up inquiringly; so doffing my cap I said:

"I have come to ask a bowl of milk, good mother," drawing a half-crown from my pocket at the same time. The moment her eye espied the silver she arose, and courtesying bade me enter the garden, and then hobbled into the house.

"Good man, open Ralphie's dada," the child asked once more, holding out the locket to me; so taking the bonnie wee laddie on my knee I opened the trinket.

On the upper side lay a blond curl of the baby's, and before me was a likeness of Ralph Dupont.

I understood now why he had not cared to join me in my trip through Wales.

THE GHOSTLY CONCERT

BY MICHAEL ZAGOSKIN

This powerful story, translated from the Russian by Jeremiah Curtin, should have an extraordinary fascination for lovers of the weird and horrible, since it would be difficult to find its counterpart in the whole range of fiction. From "Tales of Three Centuries," published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

"If any of you gentlemen have lived continually in Moscow," began Cheromuhin, laying his pipe aside, "you have surely noticed that a periodical invasion of white-walled Mother Moscow by our provincial brethren usually begins before Christmas. Almost at the same time with the appearance of frozen meat and turkeys in the game market, there stretch in, through all the barriers, endless caravans of kibitkas and all kinds of winter equipages containing whole families of landholders hastening to have a good time in the capital, examine male candidates for marriage, show their daughters in society, and spend in a few weeks all they have saved during the year.

"But in 1796 this increase of temporary residents began with the first snow; and, according to the oldest inhabitants, the ancient capital had not been so crowded, or rather crammed, for many a year. The managers of the Nobles' Club shrugged their shoulders whenever they had less than two thousand guests at a ball, and laid the blame on the Italian Medoxi, who gave masquerades in the halls and rotunda of the Petrovski Theatre.

"Indeed, public masquerades—at which people did not dance, but stifled and crushed one another—were during that winter the favorite amusement of the people of Moscow.

"Among the constant visitors at these masquerades was a certain young man, but not from the interior. Ivan Nikolaievich Zorin was his name. He had just returned from foreign parts, had lived long in Italy, loved music passionately, and always spoke of the Italian opera with transport that turned almost into madness whenever conversation touched a certain prima donna of the Neapolitan Theatre. In conversation he called her Lauretta, but would not discover to any of his acquaintances the name by which she was known in the musical world. It was evident in every way that not enthusiasm for art alone had aroused his admiration; and though Zorin did

not confide his heart secret to any man, all his friends, and I in that number, could guess why he seemed always sad and dull, and grew animated only when conversation touched the Italian opera. His unbroken sadness, with pining and a certain gloomy despondency which the English would call spleen, we simply called hypochondria, and laughed at the doctor when he shook his head over the mental disease of our friend. 'Oh, stop, Fomich!' we would say; 'what pleasure do you find in stuffing him with pills? Prescribe a couple of bottles of champagne a day, five or six balls a week, with a dose of masquerade and theatres; that will be better than your depressing and exciting medicines.'

"No matter how Foma Fomich resisted at first; he decided at last to listen to our counsel and advise Zorin to go to every ball and not miss a masquerade.

"In real truth, through taking part in all the amusements of the city, our patient seemed to grow calmer and more cheerful. Sometimes he failed to visit the theatre and refused an invitation to a ball, but he always came among the first to a masquerade and went away last.

"I was serving at that time in the guards; my leave of absence ended with the first week in Lent, and to avoid trouble I was obliged to start for St. Petersburg on Monday of that week. Wishing to take advantage of the last days of my leave and rejoice in full measure, I passed the whole carnival in boundless fashion. In the daytime breakfasts with pancakes, sleigh-rides, formal dinners; in the evening, theatres; and at night, balls and private masquerades till morning dawn. This round of amusement gave me no time to collect my senses. I was in a sort of walking dream and lost sight of my friend Zorin completely.

"On Sunday—that is, the last day of the carnival—I went to the public masquerade earlier than usual. There was a throng of people; every door had to be taken by assault, and by force alone was I able to reach the rotunda in a quarter of an hour. Music, loud conversation, and the assumed tones of masks who, although suffocating from heat, ceased not to be amiable and talk nonsense; the blinding light of crystal lustres; the many-colored dresses, and that sound of the unintelligible but deafening talk of a multitudinous mass of persons resolved to be amused at any sacrifice—confused me at first to such a degree that for some minutes I neither heard

nor saw anything. Wishing to draw breath, I began to seek a place where I might look around a little. While pushing along the wall, I heard some one calling me by name. I turned and looked; a tall man in a red domino and a mask beckoned to me. The moment I approached, his companion left him.

“‘Sit down near me. It is with difficulty that we have met,’ said he. ‘But why do you look at me so? Is it possible that you do not recognize my voice?’

“‘There is something familiar in it,’ thought I, ‘but still it is strange and unusual.’

“‘Well, if you do not know me, then look,’ continued he, raising his mask.

“I started back involuntarily; my heart sank from fright. ‘My God! this is Zorin! these are his features—oh, certainly this is he; but as he will be when lying on the table, when the last service is sung over his body. But now—no, no! a living man cannot have such a face!’ thought I.

“‘Well,’ asked he, with a certain strange smile, ‘do you not find that I have changed?’

“‘Oh, very much!’

“‘Then why do they say that grief changes a man? Not grief, but possibly joy.’

“‘Joy?’

“‘Yes, my friend. If you knew how happy I am! Listen,’ continued he, in an undertone and looking around timidly; ‘but for God’s sake let no one know of this. She is here.’

“‘She? Who?’

“‘Lauretta.’

“‘Is it possible?’

“‘Yes, my friend, she is here; and, oh, how she loves me! She left her dear birthplace; she exchanged an ever-blue sky for our cloudy and gloomy one. There, in the circle of her relatives warmed by the sun of happy Italy, she bloomed like a beautiful rose; but here, among people as cold and lifeless as our eternal snows, if she herself does not fade, she will ruin her gift, she will outlive her glory. She, accustomed to breathe the warm air of the South, was not afraid of our splitting frosts, of our wintry tempest she forgot everything, left everything, and has lain down alive in this broad cold tomb which we call our country; and all this for me.’

“‘Do you not glorify this act overmuch?’ asked I, inter-

rupting my friend. 'It is not so warm here as in Italy; but we have spring and summer as well as there. Perhaps it is pleasanter in Naples than here; I must say, however, that Moscow does not look like a tomb; your Lauretta is not the first Italian artiste whom we have seen here; and if she will give concerts——'

"'Yes, one and the last. I have consented to this. Let her enchant all Moscow, warm up for a moment your icy souls, and then die for all men but me.'

"'So she intends to remain here?'

"'Yes; now do you see how she loves me? But in return, I also—oh, my love is not a feeling, not a passion—no, my friend, no! I cannot tell whether you will comprehend my happiness or understand me. I belong wholly to her. She asked this of me; she wished this.' Here Zorin bent forward and whispered in my ear: 'I gave her my soul; now I am entirely hers—do you understand, my friend?—entirely.'

"Well, it has happened to me often to give away my soul in words; and what young man would hesitate a moment to tell a woman he loved that his soul belonged to her, that she possessed it? This is an ordinary, every-day phrase in the language of love. But still I cannot tell you with what terror and repulsion I heard the confession of my friend. The mysterious voice in which he spoke; the wild fire of his gleaming eyes; this uncontrolled, mad enthusiasm; these words of joy; the pale, withered face of a corpse!

"'O brother!' said I, with vexation, 'how can you talk such nonsense? The soul does not belong to us, and cannot be given away. Love your Italian artiste; marry her if you like; give her your heart——'

"'Heart!' repeated my friend, in a tone of ridicule. 'But what is the heart? Is the heart immortal like the soul? Will it not rot in the grave? A splendid gift, a handful of dust! Whoso gives his heart, promises to love only while it beats—and it may grow cold, if not to-day, to-morrow; but whoever parts with his soul, gives not one life, not a hundred lives, but all his endless eternity. Yes, my friend, if you give a gift, let it be a real one. Lauretta has nothing to fear now; the soul is not like the heart—it cannot be buried in the grave.'

"'Show me this enchantress, this Armida,' said I; 'this seductive demon who is filching away your soul.'

"'I do not know, myself, where she lives.'

“‘Oh, you are trifling.’

“‘No, my friend, I meet her only here. For the moment she does not wish to show herself; this will soon be over. After her concert, we shall marry and live in the country.’

“‘When will she give her concert?’

“‘Next Friday.’

“‘Next Friday! Impossible! You must have forgotten that concerts are never given during the first week in Lent.’

“‘How can that be? Laretta must know; she even said she would give it in this rotunda.’

“‘Then she must be mistaken, herself. Have you seen her to-day?’

“‘Not yet. She never comes earlier than twelve o’clock, precisely at midnight. No matter how crowded the masquerade is, no matter where I am sitting, she finds me at once.’

“‘Precisely at midnight,’ said I, looking at my watch; ‘that is, in two minutes. We shall see if she is as punctual as you say!’

“Gentlemen, if you have never met Lent at a masquerade, you have heard at least that, by accepted usage, at twelve o’clock the music ceases; this means that Lent has begun and all amusements are at an end. The moment I looked at my watch—which very likely was slow—the piercing noise of the trumpets sounded the signal for closing the masquerade, and so suddenly that I trembled involuntarily and raised my eyes.

“‘Tfu! how they startled me!’ exclaimed I, turning to my friend; but at my side was an empty seat. I looked round. At a distance in the crowd I saw a red domino walking with a tall, stately woman in a dark Venetian dress. I hurried after them; but at the same time three masks met me. Around these there was a crush that I could not break through in any way, and lost sight of Zorin’s red domino. These three masks had just appeared in the rotunda; one was dressed as a sort of tall and lank apparition in a great paper cap on which was written in large letters, ‘Dryeating.’ On each side of this mask went two others, one of which was dressed as a mushroom, the other as a cabbage. The tall scarecrow congratulated all on Lent, adding jests and sayings from which all who stood near were just dying from laughter. I alone was not laughing, and labored earnestly

with my hands and feet to break through the crowd. At last I succeeded in tearing myself free into space. I searched the rotunda through, went around the side galleries, but met nowhere the red domino or the dark Venetian dress.

"Next morning I went to take farewell of Zorin, but did not find him at home; in the evening I was galloping along the St. Petersburg highway.

"More than three months had passed since I left Moscow. Occupied with continual service, and a lawsuit which began in the lifetime of my grandfather, and which may possibly be brought to an end by some one of my grandchildren, I forgot altogether my last meeting and conversation with Zorin.

"One evening as I sat reading in the club, I came by chance on an article in which it was announced that the prima donna of the Neapolitan Theatre, Lauretta Baldusi, to the great grief of all lovers of music, had died at her villa near Portici.

"*'Lauretta!'* repeated I. *'A prima donna of the Neapolitan Theatre! Oh, but that is the same artiste with whom poor Zorin was in love to madness! How could she have died near Naples toward the end of February, when she was almost at the same time in Moscow at the masquerade?'*

"That very evening I wrote to one of my friends in Moscow, to let me know whether Zorin was well or not, and if he knew anything about his marriage. I received an answer informing me that on the first week of Lent, early Saturday morning, Zorin was found senseless on the Petrovski Square, near the theatre; that afterward he was sick unto death, and that a couple of weeks before my letter was written they took him to St. Petersburg to be cured.

"I searched for him everywhere, searched the whole city through, but all my efforts were fruitless. At last I saw him quite unexpectedly in a house where I had not the least thought or wish to find him. He was very glad to meet me, and told me of his strange adventure which began in the rotunda of the Petrovski Theatre. The following is the story, word for word, as I heard it from my poor friend:

"*'Surely you have not forgotten,'* said he, *'that I saw you last on the evening before Lent, at a masquerade in the rotunda of the Petrovski Theatre. At the moment when they were trumpeting midnight I remarked in the crowd the mask of Lauretta, who, in passing, beckoned to me. You were*

occupied at the time with something else, and it seems you did not observe how I sprang from my chair and went to her.

““ “Go home this moment,” said she, as I took her hand. “I demand also that for four days you neither leave your rooms nor receive any one. On Friday come here on foot alone, at midnight. Here in the rotunda there will be a rehearsal of the concert which I shall give on Saturday.”

““ “But why so late?” asked I. “Will they admit me?”

““ “Be not disturbed,” said Laretta; “for you the doors will be open. I have arranged the rehearsal for midnight, so that only a few artistes and lovers of music should know of it. Now go home at once, and if you do everything I demand I shall be yours forever; but if you disobey me, and especially if you receive the friend with whom you have just now been sitting and to whom you told that touching which you should have held silence, we shall never meet either in this world or in another; and,” added she, in a low tone, “though, my dear friend, the worlds are countless, if you do not follow my advice we shall not meet in one of them.”

““ In the course of two years spent in Naples, I had become acquainted with all the whims and uncommon caprices of Laretta. She was a wonderful and fascinating woman, now as gentle and obedient as a timid child, now as proud and untamable as a fallen angel. She combined in herself all possible extremes. At times she was ready to fight against Heaven itself, believed in nothing, sneered at all things; then on a sudden, without cause, she grew most superstitious, saw evil spirits in all places, took counsel of wizards, and, if she loved not, at least she feared God. At times she called herself my slave, which for the moment she really was; but when that moment of obedience had passed, she became such a power-loving woman that she endured not the least contradiction. Hence, no matter how strange her demands seemed (in Moscow), I said nothing, and promised to carry out her will, especially since she gave me her word that this was the last trial of my love.

““ You can imagine with what feelings I waited for Friday. I ordered the servants to tell every one that I was not at home, and to exclude even you. I walked back and forth in my rooms; I could begin no work, and was burning as if in fire. And the nights! O my friend, even criminals on the eve of execution do not pass such hellish night-hours as

I did. People were not so tormented even when torture was a calculated art and a science. I know not how I lived till Friday. I remember only that on that last day of my trial I was not only unable to eat, but I could not drink even so much as a cup of tea. My head was burning; my blood was not flowing, but boiling, in my veins. I remember, too, that it was not a holiday; but it seemed to me that from morning till night the bells ceased not to ring in Moscow. A clock was before me; when the hands were approaching midnight, my patience was turned to a species of madness. I was suffocating; a malignant fever struck me, and cold sweat came out on my face. At half-past eleven I put on a light overcoat and started for the theatre. All the streets were empty. Though my rooms were a couple of versts from the theatre, fifteen minutes had not passed before I had run over the whole Prechistenka, the Mohovaya, and had come out on the square of the game market. Two hundred yards distant rose the colossal roof of the Petrovski Theatre. It was a moonless night, but the stars seemed more numerous and brighter than usual; many of them fell directly on the roof of the theatre, were scattered in sparks, and then vanished. I approached the principal entrance. One door was partly open, and near it stood a decrepit old doorkeeper with a lantern; he beckoned to me and went ahead through the dark corridors.

“I know not whether it was because I had reached the appointed place, or for some other reason, but I grew notably calmer, and remember, too, that when I had looked carefully at my guide I saw that he moved without putting one foot before the other, and that his eyes were as dim and immovable as the glass eyes in wax figures. Having passed through a long gallery, we entered at last the rotunda. It was lighted up, all the chandeliers were filled with burning tapers, but still it was dark; the flames from them seemed as if painted, and gave out no light whatever. But four candles, on high funereal candlesticks, cast an uncertain glimmer on the first seats and the platform in front of them. This wooden platform was covered with music-stands, instrument-cases, notes; in one word, everything was prepared for a concert, but the musicians had not yet come. In the front row of seats sat thirty or forty gentlemen, some of whom were in embroidered French coats, and had their hair powdered; others were in simple evening dress. I sat near one of the latter.

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Allow me to ask,” said I to my neighbor, “are these all friends and connoisseurs of music whom Mme. Baldusi has invited ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Precisely so.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ I make bold to ask who that young gentleman with the expressive face is; he wears a German dress.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ That is Mozart.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Mozart!” repeated I; “what Mozart ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ What Mozart ? That’s a strange question. Why, of course, Mozart, the author of ‘Don Giovanni,’ the ‘Magic Flute’——”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ What do you tell me! Why, he died four years ago.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ I beg your pardon! He died in September, 1791; that is five years ago. Near him are Cimarosa and Handel, and behind them Rameau and Glück.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Rameau and Glück ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ On our left stands the director of the orchestra, Araya, whose opera ‘Bellerophon’ was given in St. Petersburg——”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ In 1750, during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Just so; he is talking with Lulli now.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ The chief of the orchestra of Louis XIV. ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ The very same. But do you notice in the dark corner—oh, you will see him from here: Jean Jacques Rousseau is sitting there. He is invited, not as an artist, but as a judge and lover of music. Of course, his ‘Village Wizard’ is a pretty opera; but you must confess yourself——”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ But what does this mean ? ” interrupted I, looking fixedly at my neighbor. I was about to ask him how he dared to jest with me in such insolent fashion, when I saw that he was the old man Volgin, who had been my friend for years, a passionate lover of music, and a great humorist.

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Ba, ba, ba!” cried I, “so it is you who are pleased to amuse yourself over me. Is it possible ? Is this you, Stepan Alexaievich ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ Yes, it is,” answered he, very coolly.

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ And you have come here also to listen to the rehearsal of to-morrow’s concert ? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ My neighbor nodded.

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ But permit me,” said I, while my hair was rising on end, “what does this mean ? It seems to me that you died six years ago.”

“ ‘ “Pardon me,” replied my neighbor, “it is not six, but just seven.”

“ ‘ “I recollect now that I was at your funeral,” said I.

“ ‘ “Quite possible. But when were you pleased to die?”

“ ‘ “Who? I? Have mercy on us! I am alive.”

“ ‘ “You alive? Ah, that is strange, very strange!” said the dead man, shrugging his shoulders.

“ ‘ “I wished to spring up, wished to escape. My legs would not stir; but I, as if nailed down with spikes, remained motionless in my place. All at once loud clapping of hands was heard through the hall, and Lauretta in a mask and dark Venetian dress appeared on the stage.

“ ‘ “After her stretched a long file of musicians—and such musicians! O my Lord God! what figures! Necks of storks with faces of dogs, bodies of oxen with heads of swallows, cocks with goats’ feet, goats with men’s hands—in one word, no wild imagination, no mad fancy, could create such repulsive and deformed wonders; it could not even represent them to itself after a description. Especially disgusting seemed to me those who had human faces—if faces might thus be called in which all the features were so distorted that except the chief human traits all the rest had no likeness to anything. When all this band rushed out after Lauretta to the platform, the leader of the orchestra, with the owl’s face and powdered head, sat down in the chair made ready for him; then began the tuning of the instruments. Many of the musicians were dissatisfied; most of all, the contra-bass with the bear’s face.

“ ‘ “What sort of a bark box is this?” roared he, turning in every direction. “Have mercy on me! Is it possible, Signora Baldusi, that I am to play on an instrument like this?”

“ ‘ “Lauretta, in silence, pointed to my neighbor. The contra-bass sprang from his seat, seized poor Volgin by the neck, dragged him to the stage, and placing him head downward, caught both his legs with one hand, and with the other began to draw the bow across his legs, and the fullest and deepest bass sounds thundered beneath the rotunda. At last all the instruments were tuned. The leader of the orchestra gave a signal by raising a gnawed ox-bone which served as a baton. They played the overture of the “Magic Flute.”

“ ‘ “There were wild and discordant passages, it must be confessed, and the clarinet, who blew with his nose, played frequently false; still, the overture was not badly rendered.

" 'After rather hearty applause, Laretta came forward, and, without removing her mask, sang what for me was an entirely new aria. The words were surpassingly strange—a dying woman, a denier of God, was taking farewell of her love. She sang that in boundless space and forever, with each passing instant, the distance between them would widen, that her torments would be endless as eternity, and that their souls, like light and darkness, would never be mingled the one with the other.

" 'All this was told in beautiful verses; but the music! O my friend, where can I find words to describe to you the inexplicable sadness which pressed my poor heart as that entrancing but hellish music shook the air? There was nothing of earth in it, but neither was there an echo from Heaven in that voice, filled with tears and sobs. I heard the groans of men doomed to torments eternal; the gnashing of teeth, the screams of hopeless despair, and deep sighs, coming from a breast worn with sufferings. When in the midst of a thundering crescendo composed of the very wildest and most discordant sounds, Laretta stopped on a sudden, a general and reverberating bravo was heard through the hall, and a number of voices called out:

" " "Signora Baldusi, Signora Baldusi! show yourself to us; remove your mask."

" 'Laretta obeyed. The mask fell to her feet; and what did I see? Merciful God! Instead of the young and blooming face of my Laretta, I saw a dead and dried skull. I was dumb from amazement and horror; but the other spectators spoke all at once, and raised a great cry.

" " "Ah, what charms!" exclaimed they, with enthusiasm; "look, what a skull—just like ivory! But the mouth, the mouth! A wonder, it extends to her ears! What perfection! Ah, how charmingly she gnashes her teeth at us! What nice round cavities she has for eyes! Oh, she is beautiful!"

" " "Signora Baldusi," said Mozart, rising, "grant us a favor—sing 'Biondina,' in 'Gondoletta'."

" " "But that is impossible," said the director of the orchestra. "Signora Baldusi sings the cavatina 'Biondina,' in 'Gondoletta,' only with a guitar; and there is no such instrument here."

" " "You are mistaken, maestro di capella," answered Laretta, pointing to me. "There is a guitar before you."

" 'The leader of the orchestra cast a quick glance at me, opened his owl's beak, and laughed so malignly that the blood grew cold in my veins.

" ' "But, really," said he, "pass him this way; we can make a good guitar out of him."

" 'Three of the spectators seized me, and from hand to hand passed me to the leader of the orchestra. In half a minute he wrenched my right leg off, tore the flesh away, leaving nothing but bone and dry sinews; the latter he began to stretch out like strings.

" 'I cannot describe to you the unendurable pain which this preliminary operation caused me; and although my right leg was torn off, still, when the villanous leader began to tune the instrument, all the nerves in my body were straining and ready to snap. But when Laretta took from his hands my poor leg, and her bony fingers ran along the stretched sinews, I forgot all pain, so beautiful and sweetly sounding were the tone and music of this uncommon guitar.

" 'After a brief ritornello, Laretta sang her cavatina in a low voice. Often had I heard her before, but never had she produced on me such a wondrous effect. I seemed to myself to have become all hearing; and what was more strange, not only my soul, but all parts of my body enjoyed the enchanting music, independently of each other. But my remaining leg was the most delighted of all; its enthusiasm reached such a degree of ecstasy, each sound of the guitar produced such inexplicably pleasant sensations, that it could not stay still for one instant. Every movement, too, of the leg answered to the time of the music. At one moment its movements were slow and serious, at another it jumped quickly; then it trembled slowly.

" 'All at once Laretta blundered. O my friend, all previous pain was nothing compared with what I felt then. It seemed that my skull was breaking in pieces, that they were tearing all my nerves out at once; sawing me with a wooden saw, and hacking me with a dull knife. This hellish torture could not endure long. I lost consciousness, and remember only as a dream that at the moment when all seemed to grow dark in my eyes some one called out:

" ' "Throw that broken instrument into the street." ' "

THORNBRIGHT'S SURPRISE

BY JOHN HABBERTON

It has hitherto been supposed that jealousy and hatred of all rivals were the ruling passions in an unsuccessful lover's breast ; but, in this interesting story, we are told of a young clergyman who, for the sake of the girl he cannot win, unostentatiously does his faint-hearted competitor a good turn. Copyright by the Authors' Alliance.

Tom Thornbright was so fine a fellow that all women of his acquaintance said there was but one thing he needed to do to make him perfect, and that was to marry. Women had been saying this for ten years, for Tom had reached his thirty-fifth year when the incidents occurred which brought about the surprise with which this veracious narrative has to do. He was born handsome and wealthy, and the family money had lasted until Tom was educated and fairly launched in good society. Just as he was about to enter the business world, however, the bottom came out of the family barrel—Tom's father knocked it out with some indorsements, which not only impoverished the old man, but sent him insolvent to the grave.

Tom bore up bravely under the double infliction ; he came of some good old farmer stock, such as has supplied the present generation with most of its solid men—stock that no financial cyclones can uproot, however rudely they may bend it. He was not left penniless, for the income from the estate of his mother, who had died some years before, enabled him to dress well and keep his place in the club and in society. He had another trouble, though, which could not be abated by the keeping of a stiff upper lip and the belief that his father's death was to the dear, troubled old man a blessing in disguise. Tom had begun to believe himself in love with Ettie Raytham, a sweet little girl five or six years his junior. Like most young men in society, he imagined that he knew girls quite well ; unlike most young men, he had been taught to study human nature carefully, and even to study it in the light of heredity, and one result was that he was sure that Ettie Raytham never could be spoiled by wealth or flattery, although she had plenty of both.

He could not propose to her while he had but two or three thousand dollars a year ; other young fellows often did that

sort of thing, were accepted, and unblushingly lived on their wives' marriage portions, but Tom was not that sort of man. The longer he thought of the matter, the more he assured himself that the quicker he bade Ettie good-by and left the city, the less unhappiness would there be for both of them. If he remained near her, he would be sure to propose suddenly some time when his sentiments would get the better of his principles, as all men's did at times.

So Tom, after buying a small interest in an alleged silver-mine in Dakota, and completing his arrangements to leave town to look after his property—on which he meant to use manfully on pick and shovel the muscle he had developed in his college boat crew—went to make his last call upon Ettie. He kept himself well in hand; any one might have overheard the conversation without imagining the parties were more than old acquaintances, but Tom fancied that Ettie's countenance became graver after he said he was going away. He could not help looking intently at her; he would willingly endure any misery for the sake of having a distinct picture of her in his memory. Then he fancied that whenever her eye met his she gave a little start; so he made haste to depart, lingering only as he took her hand and found she did not withdraw it.

As Tom left the house he thanked Heaven that the interview was over; suddenly, however, he thought of the other place, for as he left the house he met Wilke Straighten, a theological student, going in. Tom disliked theological students on general principles; but most of them whom he had met at college were cads, and the remainder had seemed to mistake the seriousness of deficient vitality for religious sentiment. He hated Wilke Straighten in particular, for although he was a feeble, under-sized, short-sighted fellow, he had a way among women that was very taking, and his admiration for Ettie Raytham was evident to every one. He was the only son of a widowed mother who was quite wealthy, and men at the club said that Wilke was being fattened for a big city pulpit.

"Confound him!" muttered Tom to himself as he strode away through the darkness, "I suppose he'll get her. She's a good little thing, and all the shrewd girls that don't want to marry into the clergy will advise her to take him, so as to have one less rival for themselves in the open field. If

he does get her, and doesn't make her happy, I'll play the part of big brother and make him wish he'd never been born—hang his insignificant sanctimonious soul!"

Tom carried a heavy heart to his silver-mine and worked so hard that the claim, which was little more than a "prospect hole" when he reached it, accumulated a "dump" of ore that enabled Tom to sell out, at the end of a year and a half, at a profit of five thousand dollars. Then he ventured East again, and brought some hope with him, for an old friend or two had kept him informed about his set, and nothing had been written which could imply that Ettie Raytham had given away her heart. Five thousand dollars, added to the income which he had left untouched for many months, amounted to nearly twice five, and he had often heard brokers who belonged to his club say that with ten thousand dollars clear any man with his brains in his head and a grip on his nerves was sure sooner or later to make a big strike in Wall Street.

He did not go into "the street," however, or even into the club, until he had called upon Ettie Raytham. He informed himself on the way that he was not going to make a fool of himself, but merely to renew the acquaintance; it would be time enough to go further when his hopes of wealth were realized. Though he might find her unengaged, he would not attempt to be more than a friend; still more, he would take great care not to fall deeper in love than he was, for two disappointments over one woman would be too much for a heart like his to endure.

He found the original different from the picture he had carried away of a sweet, intelligent, pretty rosebud of a girl. Miss Raytham was an inch or two taller than of old, and the bud had become a handsome flower. Tom restricted his call to half an hour, but before the first five minutes were gone he was far deeper in love than before. He couldn't help it; it was not only because of her unexpected beauty—her evident pleasure at seeing him was what opened his heart and turned his head. In spite of himself he found his feelings getting into his voice and manner, and when she gave him her hand at parting it required a terrible effort on his part to release it. He left the house with the air of a prince, yet it was again his misfortune to meet Wilke Straighten going in, and the little fellow, on recognizing and greeting him, con-

centrated such an inquiring look through his very convex glasses that Tom wanted to pick him up, break him in two, and drop the fragments into the street.

"Thornbright seems to have left his spirits out West," remarked Bloggs the broker, to a chum at the club, an hour after Tom had dropped in and greeted his old acquaintances.

"Yes; always the way with fellows who leave town and tie themselves down to money-spinning in the wilderness."

"Eh? Money-spinning?"

"Yes; they say he struck it rich."

"Umph!" After making this remark Broker Bloggs retired within himself and the club library, in neither of which places was he likely to be disturbed; before the evening ended he had renewed his acquaintance with Tom, expressed his envy of men who could dig money out of the ground while other fellows had to endure the pangs of Tantalus over the good things which were lying around in Wall Street, yet which they hadn't money enough to pick up and turn over. Tom became interested and asked questions; it was like drawing teeth to get facts out of the broker, but finally Tom was "let in on the ground-floor," to the extent of a hundred shares on a very good thing, and gave his check for a thousand dollars as a margin. Then, in spite of an occasional intrusion of Wilke Straighten's exasperating little figure and big eyeglasses, Tom dreamed happily for hours before he fell asleep.

Tom soon began to grow rich—on the broker's books, and felt justified in calling frequently upon Miss Raytham. Slowly he ceased to fear Straighten as a rival; sometimes he met him at Miss Raytham's, and the little fellow certainly was very attentive, but Tom could not see that the girl regarded him with a sentiment stronger than friendship; still, girls like Miss Raytham were not likely to give themselves away in public. Tom would willingly have been satisfied with his own chances did he not often see that inquiring look in the little fellow's eyes—a look which apparently was trying to discover Tom's intentions. He mentally cursed the little fellow's impudence, and wished that public sentiment did not discountenance boxing the ears of a man who was too religious to resist and too weak to fight.

Meanwhile love and business grew apace. In spite of a

few small losses, Tom did so well in Wall Street that Broker Bloggs dubbed him a mascot, a luck-penny, and all that sort of thing. Tom resolved that when his gains reached a hundred thousand dollars he would dare propose, for the income of that amount added to that which he annually received would enable him to maintain a wife according to the style of the Raythams' set. It looked like a great deal of money to expect, but had not certain other men, who had recently started on small capital, made even more in a single year? If not, then Broker Bloggs and many other Wall Street men lied. Besides, Tom was not confining himself to his original venture of a thousand dollars; he had put his entire capital into different ventures; he studied "the street" closely and was sure he knew what would go up, what go down. Broker Bloggs humored him until he discovered that all of Tom's money had passed into his hands for use; then that astute operator encouraged Tom to venture everything on the tremendous plunge into C. B. & A. preferred, which was sure to go up. Within a week Broker Bloggs was forty thousand dollars ahead, and Tom was wiped out of the street. Worse still, everybody knew it; losers have no confidences that brokers are bound to respect, so Tom was chaffed at the club and stared at in a pitying way in society. He felt like shaking the dust of the city from his feet forever, but it would look like cowardice. He did, however, keep away from the Raythams, thinking it the manly thing, in the circumstances, and he consoled himself with the thought that he would be relieved of the necessity of seeing little Straighten, whom he never had met anywhere else. But luck was against him even in this, for one day Straighten stopped him on the avenue, not far from the club, fixed the customary inquiring gaze upon him, and said with the half-smile, half-grin peculiar to very short-sighted persons:

"Ah, Mr. Thornbright, I—ah—thought I would say to you that I was—ah—speaking of you at the Raythams' a night or two ago, and—ah—Miss Raytham remarked that she had not seen you in an age."

The stare and the grinnish smile continued. Tom flushed and exclaimed: "Confound your impudence! If it weren't for your cloth I'd break your neck. What do you mean?"

Grin, smile, and stare disappeared as the little man in black replied: "I'm trying to give you a friendly suggestion. I'm

very sorry if you're not enough of a gentleman to understand it. Good-day."

Away went the little man, with enough dignity to supply two or three bishops, while Tom gazed after him in amazement. What could the fellow be up to? Tom had heard that some of those quiet little ministers—Straighten had recently been ordained—were sly dogs, and that all of them were on "still hunts" for rich wives. Probably that little wretch was planning to make Tom propose now and be rejected for his poverty, as most poor young men were when they attempted to marry money; then the coast would be clear for the man who had both wealth and position.

Still, Tom called; it was impossible to deny himself the pleasure after having the girl so powerfully forced upon his mind. First, however, he made arrangements to go upon the cattle-ranch of a friend in the West; the owner, who knew Tom's resources, would take long notes on payment for a part interest. There was no business, at the time, at which a man with a good head for figures could see more certain profit than in cattle-raising on a ranch. Several young swells whom Tom knew had gone West with small capital, remained on ranches three or four years, visiting New York each season, and finally returning with small fortunes. What man had done, man could do. He told Miss Raytham what his business plans were, and again she looked grave, though she soon recovered her customary manner. Evidently she was very fond of him. Would that her father might speculate, indorse for irresponsible friends—do anything, so that he might lose his money, and a poor man could honorably woo the daughter! Tom was half-disposed to offer himself then and there, and ask the girl to wait for him, but he controlled himself; he admitted that there were other men as good as he, and that it would be better—for Ettie—to marry one of them than to wait years for a man who had his fortune to make; he had seen girls wait and wither through hope deferred. He skillfully turned the conversation to such a case, and spoke indignantly of the lover who permitted it. Ettie, in turn, praised the girl for her faithfulness, and there was no knowing what might have followed had not that short-sighted little minister called just then. The two men greeted each other coldly and Tom departed, growling to himself, "I'd give a good deal to know what that little scoundrel's game is."

A few weeks later he thought he found out, for he learned from a visiting ranch-owner that the best ranch in all the West—a ranch where there was plenty of grass and water, and good protection for the herd should winter storms be severe—had a New York minister for principal owner—a man named Straighten. Then Tom raved, and his horses wished themselves dead as their owner rode whole days at the gallop, filling the air with severe language about the sneaking ways of preachers in general and the Rev. Wilke Straighten in particular. It was no secret in New York that Straighten, though an official of the church in which he occasionally conducted service, had made a lot of money on the very stock which had ruined Tom; now he was his competitor in a different line of stock; he was going to show the girl that besides being wealthy and religious he was also able in business—he was going to keep ahead of his rival in worldly affairs. The scoundrel!

Yet Miss Raytham remained unmarried. Tom feared to open letters from New York, and he could not without an effort look at society news in the city newspapers with which he kept himself well supplied. He found no bad news, however, and each winter when he ran East for two or three weeks Miss Raytham seemed as glad as ever to see him. By this time Tom had become to really know girls very well, and each year he searched in vain for the giddiness and flippancy which overtake many admirable young women in society after they pass their twenty-fifth year. Ettie's beauty seemed to increase, and as time passed there came into her face and manner a nobility which added reverence to Tom's love. Could it be possible that all of her beauty, character, and accomplishments would one day be thrown away upon that little minister? No; not if she remained herself. Yet she was human; splendid girls of a certain age had been known to make very odd marriages, apparently in desperation at the fear of remaining single for life. He wished he could spend more time at the East and keep his eye on the girl for a little while. Only one more season and he would reach his financial goal, and then—but 'twas of no use to wish; he was now sole owner of the business, and he had seen other ranches come to grief through leaving too much to their assistants. After the next season, though!—the thought of it sent an exultant flash into his eyes as he made

a parting call on Miss Raytham—a flash that brought color to her cheeks and apparently a glad answer from her eyes.

That season was in every way the best that Tom had ever made on the ranch; he sold some stock at good prices, using the money to buy cheaply the herds of two or three small operators who were suddenly taken with “mining fever.” His plan was to hold all until spring, and then, when the herd and grass were in fine condition, to sell; there would be no lack of buyers, for ranching still outranked any other industry in the country in the eyes of capitalists. To make assurance doubly sure, he postponed his winter visit to New York. Before the winter ended he was sadly glad that he had remained on the ranch, for wind and snow were so terrible and continuous that the greater part of nearly every one’s herd, including Tom’s, died, and the remainder came out in condition so bad that it seemed doubtful whether the spring grass would pull them through. And yet—such is the irony of fate—that detested preacher’s ranch was spared; between natural and artificial shelter the herd was saved from any but trifling loss! Everybody talked about it—talked about it to Tom, and asked if he knew who that lucky preacher was, until the ruined, angry, desperate man nearly lost his senses.

Only one thing was certain: in the general wreck of business he must give up hope of being in position to ask Ettie Raytham to be his wife. Both would soon be middle-aged people—according to the standard of age that men under thirty-five adopt; he had been a dismal failure in all work he had undertaken, so it was quite unlikely that even old friends would care to have him in business with them. He had plenty of friends who were doing well financially—some who were profiting by advice they had asked of him in mining and ranching. Tom had learned that friendship seldom prompts one man to share his business with another except for quite as much as a stranger could be compelled to pay; business men were not made that way. Some one might be good-natured enough to give him a clerkship that would enable him to seem to be doing something; but he had no intention of parading with New York’s army of well-born incompetents. All that seemed left for him was to knock about the West, with the hope of again making something in mining or ranching, but by the time he could hope to succeed

he and Ettie would have gray hair; he did not like to see gray-haired lovers.

For weeks he remained on his ranch, longing for the time when he could sell what remained—if any one would buy. One day while seriously wondering whether to turn hermit or prospector he received a letter, addressed in an unknown hand and postmarked "New York."

"Some new fool that wants advice about ranching, I suppose," sighed Tom to himself, as he slowly tore the end of the envelope. "It's the usual way; greenhorns always want to get into a thing about the time that veterans are trying to get out. I wonder if it is some one I can unload upon, and—Great Scott!"

This exclamation burst forth as Tom turned the letter and looked at the signature. Then he dropped the letter on the floor and stared blankly at it. Finally he recovered himself and stooped to pick it up, saying:

"I don't see why I should act as if it were a rattlesnake, even if it is signed Wilke Straighten. But what on earth—well, the quickest way to see why he writes me is to read it, I suppose!"

Tom began with trepidation; perhaps the little schemer has at last captured Ettie Raytham; if so, he would be just mean enough to write a sanctimonious letter with a great deal of old Adam in it. Tom read aloud, slowly, as follows:

NEW YORK, April 10th, 188—.

MR. THOMAS THORNBRIGHT—

SIR: Though our last communication with each other was not entirely devoid of bad feeling, I know you for an honest man, and I therefore take the liberty of consulting you about a matter of business in which there may be something to our mutual advantage. For some years I have been interested in the Double Row Ranch, and recently I have become sole proprietor. The amount of capital is greater than any man should allow to remain invested in property which from time to time varies in value, and to which he is unable to give his personal attention. I understand, also, that for several reasons the business promises to be less remunerative than heretofore, and that the recent great losses through inclement weather has had the effect of depreciating all such property.

I wish, therefore, to sell out, and as I believe my property is within a hundred miles of you, in a region entirely devoted to the business, and therefore likely to contain some possible purchasers, and as at worst the transaction should yield quite

a large commission to whoever may secure a purchaser, I write to ask if it will be convenient and agreeable to you to act for me. I do not know the present value of the herd and the range privileges, but I shall be glad to get thirty thousand dollars for everything. On this amount I will pay you a commission of ten per cent; should you succeed in getting a higher price, you are quite welcome to retain all in excess of above-named sum.

Trusting that the transaction may not seem too unimportant to merit your attention, I venture to inclose full power of attorney. Hoping for an early reply, I am

Very respectfully yours,

WILKE STRAIGHTEN.

Tom did not again drop the letter. On the contrary, he held it tightly as he again looked blank, indulged in a long, low whistle, and exclaimed:

"Thirty thousand for the Double Row Ranch?—ten per cent?—I to be—let's see—where is it?—here it is: 'Should you succeed in getting a higher price, you are quite welcome to retain all in excess of above-named sum.' Why, Double Row is worth five times what he asks for it—at least five times as much. 'Twould have brought it last fall; it ought to bring more now, when it's stood the test of such a winter. The man's a fool—about ranching at least; yet this is the fellow I've been dreading for years! Umph! Evidently there's been a pair of fools."

Again Tom looked at the last page of the letter: he seemed to doubt his own eyesight.

"Yes; there's no mistake. If the price weren't written out, I should believe he had left off a cipher at the end. And I am quite welcome to retain all in excess of—pshaw! I couldn't do it—not even with him. 'Twould be a rank swindle. But oh, what a temptation!"

Tom got upon his feet and paced the floor of his two-room house. Could he honorably act, in business, for a man whom he hated so intensely—sell his services, for money, to a rival? On the other hand, could he refuse the chance, plainly and freely offered, to become a man of means, redeem his reputation as a business man, and reward Ettie Raytham, so far as his life's devotion could be a reward, for the graciousness with which she had apparently waited for him? To take the minister's money and also the woman whom the little fellow adored would be brutal, and yet, after all, it

wouldn't be his doing, for if Ettie were to accept him, it would be proof that she could not have been willing to become Mrs. Straighten.

"I'll sell first and look into the ethics of the thing afterward," Tom exclaimed as he sat down to write a letter accepting the charge and the terms. It was a very carefully written letter, although it contained only six lines besides the superscription and signature. Tom rewrote it four times before it seemed enough business-like, decorous, and gentlemanly—just enough—not the least shade more. Then he wrote hasty notes to all possible buyers in the Territory, announcing that he was agent for the sale of Double Row Ranch. Men who could promptly be reached by mail were only part of those who came to mind; in an hour he was off on horseback to see others. Perhaps Straighten would learn what a fool he had made of himself, and sell in New York, where there are men who apparently know the value of everything on the face of the earth and are willing to buy whatever is offered at a sacrifice. In such case of prior sale, no power of attorney would save Tom; could it be that the scheming little rascal was devising just such a trick to humiliate his rival?

Fear, hope, suspicion, love, all lent Tom wings and sharpened his wits. In three days he had sold Double Row ranch for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Before the ink was fairly dry on the drafts and notes given in payment, Tom was galloping to a telegraph station, from which he wired Straighten: "Sale concluded. Please wire on receipt of this. Am waiting at station." Two hours later—they seemed two years, as Tom ground the planks of the station platform under his heavy boots—came the reply: "Delighted to hear it. Thanks for promptness."

Tom waved the dispatch triumphantly in the air and shouted: "Now for home—and her."

Three days later, and he had sold his own ranch to one of his men, the man had no money, but Tom insisted that notes would be entirely satisfactory. No sooner was he on an East-bound train than he began to count the hours, but his conscience soon took him in hand and made him very uncomfortable. The more he discussed the difference between the "upset price" and the sum he had obtained for Double Row, the less he seemed able to accept it, and he was still so un-

decided when he reached New York that he wondered whether, after all, honesty in business affairs was merely a relative term. His uncertainty compelled him to seek Straighten before he had been an hour in the city. The old exasperating look of inquiry shot from the little man's eyes as the two stood face to face and the minister offered his hand.

"Mr. Straighten," said Tom, bluntly, "you undervalued your property. I succeeded in getting——"

"Don't tell me the amount, sir, please; then I'll have nothing to regret. If the excess was large, allow me to congratulate you, with all my heart."

"But," protested Tom, who had decided to suggest a compromise, on the basis of an even division, "you should not be unjust to yourself through ignorance. I got——"

"I beg your pardon, my dear sir," interrupted the minister, "but this is a matter of conscience. I could in no circumstances take more than I agreed to receive. Kindly allow my decision to be final. I must insist upon it as my right."

"As you will, then," said Tom, taking from his pocket a check for the sum fixed by the minister, and indorsing it.

"You have my hearty thanks besides," said the little man, as Tom rose to depart. "It was an abrupt proposition to make to a gentleman with whom my acquaintance was so slight, and I was greatly relieved in mind when I learned you had accepted it—greatly relieved. Mayn't I offer you some refreshment—no? I would like to suggest—but never mind; some other time may be more appropriate for what I would say."

The minister rubbed his hands after the manner of the stage clergyman, and the old smiling grin—or grinning smile—came into his face, and Tom abruptly departed, telling himself that he wondered if that little rascal had captured Ettie Raytham after all and had waived the excess as conscience-money. Tom ground his teeth and told himself there was one way of finding out. He looked at his watch; it was nearly eight of the evening. He hurried to the hotel to which he had sent his trunks, dressed carefully, and hurried out to learn his fate.

* * * * *

"You silly fellow!" said Ettie, an hour later, "had you no eyes that you did not see I loved you?"

"I suppose I was a fool," Tom admitted, "but that little preacher looked at me so peculiarly whenever we met, and showed so plainly that he adored you, that I——"

"Do you mean Mr. Straighten? I never had a more devoted admirer, but neither did you. He has sung your praises persistently ever since he saw that I liked you—and declined the honor of his name."

"What? Why did he do that?"

"Possibly," said Ettie, after a moment, in which a grave yet sweet expression filled her face, "there are some men who love a woman for her sake instead of their own."

"But why did he always eye me so curiously?"

Ettie laughed archly and answered: "Perhaps he wondered why you could delay so persistently. I'm sure that I did."

Tom's surprise grew as time went on, though he soon became the little minister's warmest admirer and friend. A few weeks after his marriage he said:

"Straighten, my dear fellow, do tell me what reason you had for the ridiculously low estimate you put upon that ranch of yours?"

"Reason enough," said the little man, with dignity: 'twas to please a woman whom I had loved."

Then Tom's surprise became great enough to outlast his life.

ETCHING: HIS JUST DESERTS

BY EDWARD E. ROSE

Even the most sentimental would hardly care to abate a jot of the mental torture suffered by this wretch when caught in the pit he had dug for others.

Consciousness returned to Donald slowly. Where was he?

Inky darkness all about him, no sound but the beating rain. He tried to rise. Impossible—he could move neither hand nor foot. Then he remembered everything: the cliff above the track, rain beating upon him as he pried the boulder from its foundation. The earth had given way and he had fallen with the masses of rock, which now held him fast. There was no penitence in the train-wrecker's heart: he only cursed his ill-luck. What was that beneath his head?

He could not raise his hands to touch the object. One arm was pinioned by the rocks, the other had been broken in his fall. Impatiently he moved his head from side to side, until his neck touched the obstacle. It was iron.

A deadly chill came over him and he shrieked aloud.

He was pinned fast to the track, at the mercy of the train he had planned to destroy.

The storm rose higher. How the wind shrieked! It sounded like the laughter of fiends exulting over him.

Hark! A shrill whistle in the distance.

It was the express coming like an avenging Fury to blot him out of life, behead him, for the murderer he was.

How to escape? He twisted his head from side to side.

Useless endeavor, he was powerless. Again the whistle cut the air. He screamed aloud for mercy, and great drops of sweat stood on his brow. Then in a flash he saw his whole misspent life. In that last agony he lived again at his mother's knee. The ground shook beneath his executioner and its headlight was coming on like a bolt of lightning. What was that prayer his mother taught him? Hardly a second now: "Our Father——"

With a scream of triumph the express dashed by.

Then darkness, silence, except for the roar of the storm and the splash of the raindrops. They found him there next morning, unharmed by the express but dead. And beneath his head, the neck resting on the steel, they found the crow-bar he had used to dislodge the boulder from the cliff.

THE MAIDEN SMILED

BY THOMAS J. VIVIAN

Aside from the peculiar training of the feeble hero of this amusing sketch, the title of the story alone sufficiently accounts for his weak-minded doings—although even he might well have remembered the proverbial untrustworthiness of the Mongolian smile. From the San Francisco Evening Call.

He certainly used most remarkable gestures, and used them with a freedom that very much surprised young Mr. Leonard, until that youth happened to haltingly think that a Chinaman was an Oriental and that the Orientals are born gesture-makers.

He was unusually tall for a Chinaman, and unusually gaunt too, and as he threw up his long arms to emphasize some particular statement, the heavy jade bangles slipped down over his elbows; while, when he lowered his arms again, he had to spread out his fingers to keep the stone bracelets from falling to the floor. Now he would poise his left hand, palm up, in the air, and would dart his right hand in and out of this, the fingers all bunched to a point, as though it were some bird of prey swooping down on its quarry. At another time he would drop both nervous hands to the farthest limit of arm's reach, scoop up an invisible something, and then, lifting this head-high, would scatter it to the four winds, with a tornado motion of body and limbs that was very effective.

The play of his features was quite as remarkable. Like so many of his countrymen, he was deeply pitted with small-pox, but, unlike most of his countrymen, his eyes were large, though obliquely set, and full of fire. His neck was long and pliant as a snake, and indeed, when he threw back his head, opened his mouth until the corners ran up to the cheek-bones, and shot out a flash of light from under his half-shut lids, there was something quite ophidian in his appearance.

That young Mr. Leonard in his little surreptitious ramble through Chinatown was at first attracted by the gestures and Boanergian voice of the Chinaman, there is no doubt; but after a few moments had passed his attention was drawn to another of the group of which the orator was the centre. There were six of them in this group, sprawled about the little gloomy store, in which nothing particular seemed to be

sold. Five of them were men and the sixth was a woman, or girl, or child, young Mr. Leonard could not exactly say which. Anyway, whatever her age may have been, she was as pretty as a peach—or rather as a nectarine, for, like that fruit, she was small and round and plump and juicy; like it, her skin was smooth and yellowish-brown, with red splashes here and there; and she—still like the fruit—no doubt looked to be a good deal better than she really was. Her hair was starched out on each side of her head like a black butterfly's wings, and was twisted into a bar behind that looked like the handle of a black teapot. This general gloominess of head-gear was, however, relieved by sundry little paper chrysanthemums stuck here and there, while in the thickness of the teapot handle there were two gold skewers, set up like a St. Andrew's cross. Her hair was drawn back in front from a low but intelligent forehead, underneath which glittered a pair of mischievous eyes. The nose was a snub, the mouth was quite pretty and provoking, and chin and cheeks and neck were smooth and round. Down below her trousers—dark purple, like her blouse—showed two plump ankles covered with fine white socks; and beneath these were two tiny feet—naturally tiny—incased in shoes of light apple-green, with high, white soles running down to a point from toe and heel like the lines of a sampan.

The trick of finding out that a young man is looking at her is not confined to the Caucasian girl, and two minutes had not passed before Quang Loo began to preen and perk.

She accepted a conical cigarette which one of the Chinamen offered her, throwing out a deprecatory glance at young Mr. Leonard as she did so, as though to ask excuse for the mannish custom, and pulled back her loose sleeves—there seemed to be five or six of them—showing a dimpled arm that was altogether feminine. There followed coy looks in the shelter of a big red silk handkerchief; roguish smiles half-hidden by a veil of very queer-smelling tobacco smoke, until, almost before he knew it, young Mr. Leonard was deep in the midst of a first-class flirtation with a third-class heathen.

The experience was one that made young Mr. Leonard tingle clear down to the tips of his brilliant yellow gloves and that made him flush so that his spectacles actually got dewy. It was the first time he had ever done such a thing, and he trembled with a delicious fever of joyful fright to

think of what he would do if ever his mamma should find out what he was about.

He and his mamma were Boston people, quite rich and undoubtedly superior. She was a widow and this was her only son, her "mother's boy." He had been brought up like a pet lamb, and, like that festive young creature, was very innocent and very weak—and he looked it. Though now nearly twenty, his mamma still called him Baby, and so did nearly everybody else for the matter of that. She would have kept him in knickerbockers if she could possibly have done so, but even young Mr. Leonard's mild spirit rebelled at this, and he insisted on clothing his flaccid little self in the rig of the ultra-Anglomaniacs. On those rare occasions on which mamma allowed him to stray from under her maternal eye her parting injunction invariably was, "Now, Baby, be sure you don't get into mischief," and here he was getting into the very worst description of that article.

He had passed the handkerchief phase and had arrived at that desperate state where he was feeling shyly in his pocket for a visiting-card when, in one of the gestureful Chinaman's comprehensive sweeps of arms and vision, the Celestial saw what was going on. For a moment his hands hung suspended, then they dropped with a thwack on two bony knees, while he shot out a few gutturals to his companions. These looked quickly and sharply out of the little store window and up and down the street, and then, at some more gutturals from the tall Chinaman, they closed swiftly around the startled youth.

Before he knew what had happened young Mr. Leonard found himself inside the store, sitting down beside the little Chinese girl—much closer than he had ever dared to imagine, and the six Chinamen so thickly grouped about him that he was hidden behind them as by a wall—a little wall of China, in fact. With child-like confidence and affection the maiden put her right arm around his waist, and kept it there with a vigor that was quite surprising, while she brought her left hand, holding the big red silk handkerchief, so closely up to young Mr. Leonard's mouth that he could only talk in a sort of muffled undertone. Immediately in front of him towered the tall Chinaman, and in the Chinaman's hand was a huge revolver.

"You wan' buy that lill gel?" inquired this monster, work-

ing the revolver around until its muzzle looked like a revolving disc in an experiment in hypnotism.

"Good gwacious, no!" young Mr. Leonard was understood to stammer.

"Wha' for then you tly mashee, heh?"

"Good gwacious!" stammered the youth again, and there stuck, feeling very much as if he would like to cry.

"Lookee heah, you dam fellah," said the Chinaman, throwing open his mouth as though he was going to swallow his victim; "me, Quong Ah Wok, baddest highbindeh San Flancisco. Sixteen man-boy like you"—ticking them off on his fingers with the pistol-barrel—"I kill already this week. Now I kill you too 'less you buy this lill gel or give hund'ed dollah."

"I haven't got so much money with me," moaned young Mr. Leonard.

"How much you got?" persisted Ah Wok.

"Only about fifty-three dollars and some odd cents, don't-cher-know," chattered the victim behind the red silk handkerchief.

"Lemme have all you got—dam quick," said the terrible Ah Wok, playfully poking the revolver in his victim's vest-pocket.

Young Mr. Leonard lost no time in handing over his coin and bills, though the operation left his purse as limp as his legs.

"Now, then," said Ah Wok, with a combined movement of the head, body, and arms that made him look like a gigantic crane about to take flight—"now, then, young fellah, you skippee heap fi-fi; and, lookee heah, you no say no word any one or I come—we all come—kill you in your lill bed."

Young Mr. Leonard wanted no further permission, and, the encircling arm of the maiden being released, he tottered out and did not stop tottering until he had reached the hotel. There he half-frightened mamma to death by his ghastliness, but he attributed it to "climbing so many beastly hills," and after lying down for an hour or two with a bottle of smelling-salts to his nose he was again able to stand on his feet and face the wicked world.

The next day was Sunday, and young Mr. Leonard and his mamma went to the First Bapterian Church, that being the

sect of which the Leonards had always been strong supporters. Mrs. Leonard's devotions were considerably interfered with by the haunting suspicion that she knew the bonnet in front of her, and sure enough, when its wearer happened to turn round to see the singers, who should it be but Mrs. Todhunter, also of Boston.

"Stay after service, my dear," whispered Mrs. Todhunter, during one of the hymns; "we're going to have a treat—converted Chinese."

All the missionary zeal of the New Englander was stirred at this hint, and they stayed.

The first part in the appendix of the service was a Chinese Sunday-school, and young Mr. Leonard did not seem to be half as charmed by the services as his mother had expected him to be; indeed, it was all he could do to keep from sneaking out of the pew or lying down in it under plea of being poorly.

He heard the devout heathen singing some horrible travesty of dear old "Rousseau's Dream" with all the vigor and tunefulness of a blacksmith's bellows, and then he heard a resonant, crackly voice, at sound of which his heart melted like wax within him. He glanced fearfully up. There was no mistaking that ophidian head and those free gestures—it was Quong Ah Wok, the prince of highbinders.

He was telling the story of his conversion, of his being brought out of the darkness and confusion of ancient Confucianism into the perfect clearness of new Bapterianism, and telling it with a redundancy of picturesque action which young Mr. Leonard knew only too well.

"And now me cl-lean!" cried the convert, with a fountain-like movement of the hands from the chest upward and outward; "all same cl-lean like snow, while you, pool sinnels, black like Melican man's shoe. Come be clean, come be white, then all go Heaven, sing, sing, sing folevah—amen."

To say that young Mr. Leonard was amazed is but faintly to express his condition. He was simply stupefied, and it was in this stupor that he somehow knew his mamma was taking him by the arm and leading him up to the pulpit platform to shake hands with the converted Ah Wok.

"So charmed," he heard his mamma say, and then he felt his hand seized in a bony paw; a few quick, low gutturals were spoken, and then there was a thin giggle.

He looked up perforce, and there, sitting in sweet demureness, was the little Chinese maiden.

"This my niece, also one Clistian gel," said Ah Wok, with a fearful working of his mobile jaws and lowering of his lids; "you please shake hands wif lill Clistian gel."

Young Mr. Leonard put out a moist, quivering hand, and felt it gently tickled in the palm. He ventured a timid glance from the corner of his eyes and met one as full of mischief as a monkey's. He thought of Celestial wile, of his fifty-three dollars, and sighed.

And the maiden smiled.

GYPSY AND COUNT

BY SACHER MASOCH

In this story of love and adventure, by a noted Hungarian writer of the present day, we are carried back in the centuries to the time when his country was, in part, a province of Turkey ; and, forgetting the realism of modern novels, turn with avidity to all the delightful paraphernalia and simplicity of a romance. Translated from the German by Emma M. Phelps.

Night lay—a balmy, perfumed summer's night—upon the broad plains, the castled heights, the blooming vineyards of the Danube. On a high rock springing abruptly up from the water the castle of Thurzo was perched. At its foot nestled the straw-roofed huts of a little village. Slumber brooded over all—above in the high vaulted chambers of the castle; below in the low clay huts of the village. Only the young and lively wife of the lord of the castle still kept her vigil.

The attendants, indeed, believed their mistress to have been asleep some hours back; but unknown to all she had arisen from her couch and now sat alone on a small balcony that hung, perched like a marten's nest, high up in one of the buttresses of the castle. As the lady sat there drinking in the beauty all around her, the strains of a violin, exquisitely played in the valley below, fell upon her ear. It was a wonderfully sweet and subtle melody that now broke the stillness of the night, and fell like balm upon the heart of the listener. She sat there listening eagerly, intently, until the last note died slowly away.

The next night, however, while seated as before on her balcony and the music again falling on her ear, the countess summoned her maids and ordered messengers to be sent in search of the unseen musician. A page returned presently bringing a gypsy with him. The gypsy wore a blouse of scarlet linen, his feet were bare, and no covering was upon his long, black elf-locks that hung divided about his brown, lean face; in one thin, tawny hand he held a battered old fiddle. In obedience to the countess' commands, he began playing one of those wild melodies that form such a fitting accompaniment to the strange, beautiful dances of his race. In reply to the countess' questioning, he said that his name was Asboth; that for the present he and his wife were living in one of the huts in the village below. Soon, however, they would go back to their tribe, and resume their wandering life.

The countess, who was anxious to keep him near her, proposed to him to enter her service. The gypsy consented, but with the proviso that when the desire should come upon him to resume his free, wild life again he should be at liberty to do so.

Some weeks after this, by a strange freak of destiny, the countess and the gypsy woman gave birth on the same day and at the same hour to boys.

To the wife of the gypsy the young count was given to nurse, and in her care and to the music of Asboth's violins the two children grew up. From the very first, the son of the count manifested as much love for and skill at the instrument as the fiddler's son himself. Stephan, count of Thurzo, loved indeed the violin better even than horse or hound or falcon, better than tilting at the lists or riding in the tourney, better, far better, than all study of books or rusty parchments. Both children were apt and willing pupils of Asboth; and Count Thurzo, observing this, gave each of the lads on his twelfth birthday a fine and valuable violin.

Time passed on, and the children were now tall, handsome youths. The love they bore each other was as deep and fervent as that of twin brothers. In appearance, however, they were quite unlike. For Gezas, the gypsy, was brown as a hazelnut, but Stephan, the count, red and white as a flower.

When from time to time Asboth left his home to go wandering, fiddling, through the land, the two boys never failed to accompany him on these pilgrimages. Although Stephan's parents tried to keep him home at their side, they were powerless to do so. Entreaties, threats, punishments even, could not keep him from his beloved gypsy playmate and comrade. One day, however, when the lads were tall striplings of eighteen or nineteen, Asboth fell heavily to the ground, his precious fiddle dropping from his brown, nerveless fingers. His young companions hastened to raise him up, but it was already too late, he was dead. He had died, however, as he had wished to die, on the high-road, the blue sky above him, the green turf beneath. He was buried in the shade of the linden-tree where he fell, with his precious fiddle lying on his breast. The lads returned to the castle directly after, bringing the news of their companion's fate with them. For some weeks after, they remained quietly at home; then again the

longing for their wandering, troubadour life attacked them, and this time stronger than ever before.

They had been on the road some days when one hot, sultry afternoon they found themselves just outside the gates of the town of Presburg. They were weary and footsore, and laid themselves down beneath a wide-spreading elm-tree to rest. Lying there half asleep, they were suddenly aroused by the sound of a hunting-horn in their immediate vicinity. Directly after, a stag pursued by dogs and hunters burst from a thicket not far away from them. A huntress rode at the head of the troop, a young and beautiful woman. When the stag had been brought to bay, it was she who, dismounting, came forward to give him the death-stroke.

When the fair Diana had remounted and was about to ride away again, Stephan seized his violin and played a soft, yearning melody. The lady, turning her horse, came up to where he lay beneath the tree, and, drawing rein, remained listening in silence till the last strain had died away. She gazed long and attentively at the count, then asked imperiously:

"Who are you? Whence come you?"

"We are strolling musicians," answered Stephan, modestly, yet without a trace of servility in mind or tone. "We are called, in the country round about, 'the two fiddlers.'"

The lady nodded her head thoughtfully.

"I have heard of you before. You, however, are no gypsy, no strolling fiddler. How is it that you lead the life of one?"

"The love of music, of change, of the sight of fair smiling faces, causes me to journey, fiddling, about the land," he returned, looking at her with eyes as proud and unflinching as her own. And if she was struck by his handsome face and nobility of form and stateliness of bearing, he in his turn was no less fascinated by her wonderful beauty. His eyes rested admiringly on her slight, supple figure, which her close-fitting habit of dark green velvet set off to the greatest advantage; on her dainty little head with its long, dark ringlets, on which a little cap of velvet with heron's feathers was jauntily perched; on her dark blue eyes that smiled down at him as he stood there before her.

"Would you not like to enter my service?" she asked, after a few moments' thoughtful consideration of the two.

"Too great an honor for us, gracious lady," interposed Gezas, suddenly. He too had examined the lady as atten-

tively as his companion, but unlike him he distrusted and disliked her from the first glance.

"But we will gladly pass a few days beneath your roof, if you will allow us, gracious lady," Stephan hastened to add eagerly.

"Very well," she returned; "follow my train into the city; you will not be able to keep up with us, but any child you meet in the street will direct you to the palace of the Princess Irma Grafsalkowich."

She nodded and galloped off, followed by her suite.

Stephan was already acquainted with her, at least by reputation. She was a widow, much courted and sought after, but who had as yet shown no desire to put her head beneath the yoke of wedlock a second time.

The court at Presburg rivalled in splendor that of the emperor's at Vienna, and in its patronage of poets, artists, and sculptors that of the Medici at Florence.

She took also a lively interest in politics, and was supposed to favor the Imperial party, though at the same time managing to keep on friendly terms with Rakoczy and the pasha-governors of the provinces in Hungary under the dominion of the sultan. Neither party, however, could boast of having attached her to its side, and she was therefore courted and distrusted by both.

When the princess had returned to her palace and had dined, she remembered suddenly the two wandering minstrels she had encountered in the morning.

She sent for them and had them ushered into her boudoir. The princess received them lying on a splendid Turkish divan, alone and unattended.

Stephan entered the apartment, followed at a distance by Gezas. He bowed low before her and silently awaited her commands.

"You are no gypsy," she began abruptly, after eying him for some moments in silence. "No strolling, wandering minstrel, at least by birth. Were you stolen when a child from your home by the gypsies, and have you lived among them ever since?"

"No, highness," was the brief answer.

"Who and what are you?" she demanded with impatience.

"Pardon me, highness, if I for the present keep that a secret."

"What is your name—or is that too a secret?"

"Stephan, highness."

"Play for me, Stephan—but nothing you have heard or learned. Let your soul, your heart, speak to mine in music."

Stephan obeyed. When he had finished playing, the princess remained silent a while, then suddenly exclaimed, "Your music could teach one how to love."

"Is love, then, a lesson to be learned?" he returned quickly.

"You are no wandering fiddler," she replied in her turn.

"Let the mask drop now. It is time. Who are you?"

"Stephan, Count Thurzo," he answered, flinging himself at her feet and pressing his lips to her hand.

She smiled down at him and did not withdraw her hand.

Stephan remained at the palace; in a short time he was the declared and accepted lover of the princess. But he was not happy. His *fiancée* refused to set any time for the marriage. When he urged a speedy union, she laughed at him for his impatience or grew restless at his importunity. Often she was cold and haughty to him, as though he were really a base-born fiddler, living on her bounty, instead of a great and powerful magnate. Then Stephan, growing weary of the treatment he received at his fickle mistress' hands, would wander off again with Gezas throughout the country. Several times he returned to his own castle, vowing never again to return to Presburg. But the wily princess understood well how to lure him back again, to keep him securely in her toils and at her feet.

One day, however, Stephan, sitting with Gezas on the banks of the Danube opposite a little island where the princess had built herself a summer pavilion, was addressed by his companion:

"Why are you sad to-day, count?"

Stephan gave no answer, but sighed deeply.

"You are tormented by the treatment of the princess toward you. Think of her no longer, my lord. She is false—in every way. Incapable of truth or faithfulness. She is in no way worthy of a love like yours."

"You use strange words—you, a gypsy—in speaking of a great and noble lady."

"True words, nevertheless, my lord. And I can prove their truth. This princess you love is both false and cruel, as I can show you this very night if you choose to have me do so."

"What is it you know about her—speak."

"I know that this princess hesitates to bestow her hand upon you, although she loves you—that is, as much as such a woman can love—because she is ambitious and hopes to wed the illegitimate son of the emperor. She dreams, too, with France and Turkey's aid, to one day sit upon the throne as viceroy of Hungary."

"Can this be true?"

"That it is so, you can discover to-night, yourself. On that island yonder the princess will within an hour have an interview with Rakoczy. If you choose, we can row across to the island, and, concealing ourselves in the grotto near the pavilion, be witnesses of what will take place at this interview."

"What shall I decide?" exclaimed Stephan, despairingly—"trust her implicitly, as I love her devotedly, or listen to you, who do not like her and have always distrusted her?"

"Believe and trust in neither of us, but to your own eyes and ears, and that too at once. Within an hour you can see and hear what sort of a woman it is whom you love and wish to marry. And this very night—only trust to my guidance."

"That I will do gladly," answered Stephan.

"Then follow me," returned the gypsy, and going down to the river he unmoored a boat lying there, and, the two stepping into it, Gezas took the oars and rowed across to the island on which stood the pavilion.

On reaching the opposite bank, the gypsy concealed the boat among a clump of weeds and rushes and the two crept softly and stealthily through the thick shrubbery surrounding the garden until they reached the grotto, where they concealed themselves behind a thick veil of ivy hanging before the mouth of the grotto. They were quite secure from all eyes, however sharp. They had not lain very long in hiding when voices broke the stillness of the night. Peering through the ivy, Stephan could see by the light of the moon a tall, stately man wrapped in a dark mantle, upon whose arm the princess leaned familiarly. They came straight up to the grotto and seated themselves on a bench near it. The moonlight, shining full on the face of the cavalier, enabled Stephan to recognize him as Rakoczy, prince of Siebenburgen. Every word of the conversation between the princess and her companion was now audible to him. From its tenor he was not long left in doubt in regard to the relation between the two. They were

betrothed; their wedding would follow as soon as Rakoczy's ambitious plans both as regarded the emperor and the sultan should have been successful. They parted as lovers part, and it was with great reluctance that Rakoczy bade adieu to his *fiancée*. She on her part, however, seemed but little inclined to linger. Their ambitious schemes discussed, their plans of aggrandizement and conquest laid out, she was quite willing to have her lover go on his way. It was plain, even to Stephan's jealous eyes, that ambition was leading her to make this marriage—her heart was not in it.

But he was furious at her perfidy, furious at seeing his hopes shattered—at knowing that this fair, false woman had played with his honor and his affections. He determined to fly from her presence. He would make her no reproaches, he would be gone this very night—and without a word. That night Irma heard beneath her chamber windows the music of Stephan's violin. She smiled as she listened, little knowing that it was a farewell her lover was bidding her—an eternal farewell.

When she became aware, however, that Stephan was gone, and forever, she sought to win him back again. She sent messenger after messenger after him to bid him return to her. As messages proved unavailing, she had recourse to writing. Letter after letter followed Stephan after his return home. But all her endeavors were fruitless. Stephan refused to listen to her messages; he left her letters unanswered. Then her love, rejected, disdained, turned to hatred, bitter, burning, furious hatred. All her thoughts were now of revenge—revenge on the lover who had deserted her, who scorned her so bitterly. He gave her no reasons for his desertion of her.

In the mean time Stephan remained quietly at home with his parents. He gave up, for some time afterward, his troubadour-like wanderings about the country with his foster-brother Gezas.

Only when he received authentic information of the princess' marriage to her former suitor Siebenburgen and departure for the bridegroom's castle in Hungary did he resume his wanderings. One day, however, when in the neighborhood of a forest on the edge of the pasha of Ofen's domain, the two musicians became suddenly aware that they were being followed by a man on horseback. This horseman appeared, however, rather to be a spy upon their movements

than to have any intention of attacking and robbing them. They hastened their footsteps, as the neighborhood was unknown to them, and their close proximity to Turkish territory not reassuring.

They soon, however, succeeded in leaving the forest behind them. About a mile farther on, they came upon a *czarda* (inn) and entered it. The horseman had some time before ridden away. During the night, however, when Stephan and Gezas had retired to rest, there came a loud knocking at the door of the *czarda*. On the innkeeper's opening it, a band of armed and masked men pushed violently past him into the house and entered the chamber where the foster-brothers were lying, and, bidding them arise and dress as quickly as possible, bound them and carried them off. On they went through the darkness until they came to a slight eminence where a group of mounted men were drawn up. By the flickering red light of the torches the prisoners could see that these last were Turks. To them they were handed over by their captors. The leader of the troop, after looking closely at the prisoners for some moments in silence, exclaimed: "The gypsy I do not want. Let him be off." And Gezas, who would have lingered near his master, was driven away by blows of the horsemen's long whips. Stephan, however, was bound securely to a horse and the troops galloped off. After some hours' journey he was brought into the presence of the pasha of Ofen. The latter measured him with haughty looks of exultation, and exclaimed in triumphant tones: "You are now my slave; and in my service be sure you will be taught, and thoroughly, the virtues of obedience and humility."

And now began for Stephan a time of unmitigated and unameliorated misery. He was given the hardest tasks, loaded with chains and every indignity. He was attached to the personal *suite* of the pasha, but this was done, not as a favor, but to give his captor an opportunity of pursuing him continually with a tyranny and severity that knew no abatement.

The pasha seemed really to revel in inflicting torments and humiliations upon his victim. Stephan's belief, that this inhuman treatment of him was due to the hatred felt by a fanatic Turk toward one whom he knew to be a Christian, was soon to be dispelled by an incident that took place some weeks after his imprisonment. One day he was taken by two soldiers into a field adjoining the pasha's place; there he was

harnessed to a plough and driven in the furrows. When he stumbled or reeled from fatigue and weakness, he was driven forward by heavy blows from long whips of bullock's hide. While this scene was being enacted, the pasha, accompanied by a woman wrapped from head to foot in a thick veil, came into the field, and from a small hill in the middle of it stood watching the spectacle in silence.

At last Stephan fell face forward to the ground, and lay there moaning, unable to rise in spite of the blows that were rained down by the drivers on his prostrate, quivering body. At that moment the woman, stepping up to where he lay, and spurning him with a tiny foot cased in a gilded slipper, threw back her veil, revealing to the tortured man's haggard eyes the face of his former mistress, Princess Irma.

"Ah, you recognize me, then, Count Thurzo," she exclaimed, laughing scornfully. Stephan making her no reply, she went on furiously, "I am she whom you swore to love faithfully, and then basely deserted."

"That is a falsehood," he returned hotly.

"Do not attempt to deny it," she returned violently. "You forsook me. And I—I have revenged myself well on you—for your treachery. It was I that delivered you into the pasha's hands, that made you his slave—and your slavery will be a perpetual one. Of that I have taken care. The ransom your parents have already offered the pasha has been scornfully refused by him. No ransom—not even that of a king—could free you from his bonds. You will die a slave, a tortured, miserable wretch, who will desire death, and long for him as for a deliverer."

Stephan gave no answer. With the patience of a Christian and the courage of a hero he submitted silently to the inevitable.

That very evening, however, at supper, while waiting at table on the pasha and the princess, he was again subjected to gross indignity. "Down on your face, slave," thundered the pasha in stentorian tones, and, motioning with his hand to three black slaves standing near, Stephan was flung by them face downward on the floor before the pasha. He placed his foot on the neck of the prostrate figure and turning to the princess seated at his side inquired:

"Are you satisfied now, princess, with my treatment of the slave you have sent me?"

"Quite satisfied," she answered, casting a look of gratified hate and malice at Stephan, lying in the dust before her.

While Stephan was the victim of a slighted woman's vengeance, Gezas sought assiduously for a way to liberate his master. He managed at last to effect an entrance into the pasha's palace in the disguise of a pedler.

In this garb he penetrated into the harem and discovered, among the inmates there, a young girl whose heart had been touched by the sufferings and indignities that the captive nobleman was subjected to by the tyranny of the pasha.

One night, therefore, Stephan, lying sleepless in his cell, heard the sound of a violin played softly beneath his window. He recognized the air as one that he and Gezas had often played together. Directly after, a stone, around which a slip of paper was wrapped, was flung in at the window. On the paper was written, "To-morrow—midnight—in the east arbor in the small garden." A few more notes, played softly, followed—then all was silent as before.

The next night at midnight Stephan stole unperceived into the garden and concealed himself in the arbor. To his great surprise, after waiting some minutes, there appeared, not Gezas, whom he expected, but a slight, veiled female figure.

He mistrusted treachery at first, but was reassured when, on the figure throwing back the veil, the beautiful face of one of the ladies of the harem was revealed. It was that of a young girl who only a short time before had been brought as a slave to the pasha. These two, captives though they were, had yet managed to exchange glances—glances that spoke pity on her side and profound admiration on his. Falling at the feet of the lovely Zobeide, Stephan covered her small hands with kisses.

"Only a word is necessary," she whispered; "do you really love me?"

"With all my heart—from my inmost soul."

"I will help you to escape," she returned; "but if you would regain your liberty, you must trust and obey me implicitly."

"That I will do cheerfully," he answered, smilingly.

The lady seemed about to speak again, when a low note from Gezas' fiddle warned them to separate immediately. A whole week of suspense was now passed by Stephan. During that time he heard nothing of either Zobeide or Gezas.

One morning, however, when Stephan had almost given up hope of ever effecting his escape, as he was waiting in the ante-chamber of the pasha while the latter was holding an audience, Gezas, in his disguise of a pedler, came quickly into the room and slipped a scrap of paper silently into his hand. On it were scribbled a few words which informed him that on that very evening after sundown the ladies of the harem would be taken to the baths on St. Margaret's Island, an island in the Danube a short distance away from the palace of the pasha. They would be taken out to the island in a galley rowed by slaves and guarded by two eunuchs. Stephan was to slip into the garden, and, as there would be no moon that night, he could swim to the island and under cover of the darkness hide himself among the tall reeds that grew on the banks. When, that evening, the bark had sailed away to the island, the count stole into the garden, and, climbing the wall surrounding it, dropped into the river and swam to the opposite bank. The bark had already landed, and as he lay there hidden among the reeds he could hear the voices and soft laughter of the ladies proceeding from the bath-houses near by.

Suddenly from a little red-roofed kiosk a silvery veil was waved once, twice, thrice. Directly after, a boat put off from the opposite bank and rowed swiftly and silently toward the spot where Stephan lay concealed. As it came closer, the watcher could detect, even in the obscure half-light, the well-known form of Gezas. A low whistle from the count enabled the rower to push his boat in where he lay. He was helped into it by his faithful friend, and, after a few moments of anxious waiting, light footsteps were heard running down the bank and Zobeide appeared, peering anxiously around for the boat. Stephan jumped quickly out again, and, lifting up the lady in his arms, waded out again to the boat, where, after placing her in it, he followed. A few rapid strokes of Gezas' strong arms sent them flying down the stream.

In less than a half-hour they were outside of Turkish jurisdiction and in the dominion of Hungary. All danger was now over.

One can well imagine the joy and rapture with which Stephan's parents received their long-lost son again, and the latter's gratitude toward the fair Zobeide and his faithful foster-brother.

Hardly, however, was their son at home again than the hearts of both his parents thirsted for revenge on the cruel and haughty Turk who had imprisoned and ill-treated him.

Heralds were sent by Stephan's father to the pasha of Ofen challenging him to mortal combat with his whilom captive. Others were sent to the consort of Princess Irma with a similar message. No notice was taken of the challenge. One night, however, not long after, the pasha, at the instigation of Gezas, who had corrupted a gypsy slave of the Turk's, was seized by his own body-slaves, bound hand and foot, and thrown on board a vessel at anchor in the Danube. It was the intention of Gezas, who commanded this vessel, to carry his prisoner to Stephan, to be dealt with as the latter might deem fit. But an alarm having been given by other inmates of the palace, galleys were sent in pursuit of the vessel to rescue the pasha. When the captors of the Turk saw that their pursuers were gaining on them, they set upon the pasha and slew him as he lay there bound upon the deck. Then jumping into the river they endeavored to escape by swimming. They were fired on by those in pursuit, and many killed. Gezas, however, got off safely and made his way back to the castle. Shortly afterward, the Princess Irma's castle was attacked by Stephan and a troop of his retainers, the lady taken prisoner and confined in one of the towers at Thurzo Castle. Here she languished a year, when she was set free, it being the occasion of Stephan's marriage to Zobeide. The fair infidel remained at the castle in the care and under the guardianship of Stephan's parents.

During that time she was instructed in the tenets of the Christian religion by the chaplain of the castle.

She was baptized and married on the same day.

In the great picture gallery, of the ancient castle of Thurzo, two portraits hanging on the wall never fail to attract attention and admiration. One is the portrait of a handsome, blond man wearing the dress of a magnate of Hungary; at his side hangs a short, curved, jewelled sabre, while in one hand he grasps a violin.

The other portrait represents a beautiful, dark-eyed, dark-haired young woman dressed in Turkish costume. From her white shoulders droops a long caftan of silver brocade; her dark tresses are surmounted by a turban of filmy silver gauze.

THE DUEL AT FROG HOLLOW

BY WILL N. HARBEN

The imitativeness of our African brethren is amusingly depicted in this laughable sketch; though the tremors that beset the principals, the lofty courage of their seconds, and the general conduct of this bloodless encounter but slightly parody the antics of our own race when engaging in the duello.

A balmy summer morning. A weather-stained cottage in a Georgian town. A ragged fence, made half of planks, half of mismated pales, surrounded a weed-grown yard. A pig-pen against the front fence held a hungry inmate, which squealed at every passer-by. A portly, middle-aged negress smoking a clay pipe, her heavy eyelids half closed over somnolent orbs, sat in the cottage door, over which clambered a purple and pink clematis vine. A tall negro slouched down the sidewalk in the sunshine, and opening the sagging gate slowly entered. His head was bound up with a blood-stained cotton handkerchief and one of his eyes was frightfully swollen. The woman did not look up till her husband was before her; then she roused herself with a start.

"De Lawd save us, Peter, whut kin got the matter?" she exclaimed.

The new-comer did not answer, but, stepping over the woman's feet, he passed into the cottage, followed by her anxious glance. He took a seat near a window and began to rub his injured brow with his long black hand.

"What dis, Peter? Have er mule throwed yer? Is yer been blowed up wid er blastin' rock?"

Her rapid questions seemed to irritate him.

"Huh! no!" he grunted, turning his broad back upon her and closing an eye to test the sight of its blearing mate.

"My!" exclaimed his wife, knocking the cold ashes out of her clay pipe into the palm of her hand, from which she emptied them outside the door; "My! watcher bunged up so fer? You look lak er house might er fell in on yer."

"I got in er lill 'sturbance wid Nelse Pullam," said the wounded black, sheepishly; "he 'lowed I tol' er lie, en I let 'im hat one er my Josies in de lef' jaw. No nigger kin tell me open face I lied."

"En so yer hat er reg'lar fis' fight; wall, dat's too bad, but

I reckon yer did right, kase de ain't no use'n letten er nigger run dry shod over yer. But I hope ter goodness you blooded 'im up wass'n ye'se'f, kase ef you didn't Mandy is des boun'-en sho ter th'ow it up ter me at chu'ch Sunday."

"'Tain't end' yit," said Peter, waxing a little warm over the recollection that by active dodging Nelse had come out of the fight without any signs of injury to his personal appearance. He began to stroke his eye with increased frequency, and blurted out: "You des hol' yer taters en wait—dat's all—you des wait; ef you don't yer suppin drap, you ain't er settin' in dat cheer; now dis is Peter Brown er talkin'."

"Yer ain't gwine fight ergin, is yer?" asked the woman. "Seem lak yer orter hat it out en done wid 'fo' yer stop."

"Nelse 'low we's in fer er duel lak Marse Johnson en Marse Martin is fit las' mont'," answered Peter, with a blending of dignity and awe in his tone. "He 'low his secum will call roun' on me terreckly en fer me ter be ready."

"You don't seh!" exclaimed Aunt Frances. "You gwine fight er reg'lar duel. Well, dat do beat de worl'! It'll be de fus' one darkies ever hat up in dis town. I never is spec' ter live ter see de day my own husban' is in er duel. I hope en pray, w'en dis duel is thoo wid, dat Nelse will let you erlone, no matter which one kills, or mebbby befo', de 'll be er big funerel en talk. Whar it gwine tek place?"

"I don't know yit."

"Kin women folks go?"

"No," haughtily, "ain't yer got er speck er de lill gump-tion you bo'n wid? You orter know nobody is 'low ter be present on sech 'casions 'cep' de two men en two secums en mebbby er doctor er two."

At this juncture three negroes came hurriedly up to the gate.

"Hello, Peter," said the foremost one, panting as if he had been walking very fast, "how you is?"

"I'm teler'ble, Jim," answered Pete, rising slowly and going to the door; "won't yer come in en set arwhile?"

"No," said the negro, looking significantly at Aunt Frances, who still obstructed the doorway; "no, I jes' call 'round ter see you on er lill private business. Come out ter de gate."

"Watcher want?" asked Peter, walking out and leaning over the fence.

"Peter," began the visitor in a pleading tone, "Peter,

Nelse Pullam 'low you en him is in fer er duel; en I come 'ight down, kase I want ter be yo' second. Me an' you is good frien's, en I 'low I orter hat it kase I de fus' one ter ax you. I ain' gotter blame spec' er use fer Nelse kase he run ergin me fer deacon in we-all's chu'ch, en I want ter be wid you w'en yo' ball lay 'im out. Now, kin I hab de place?"

Peter hung his swollen head between his two hands for a moment. A suspicious observer might have noted that he was very ill at ease.

"Watcher seh, Peter?" asked Jim, anxiously.

"Jim Banks," said Peter, sternly, "who tol' yer dat black scrapin' er de earth want er fight er duel? Who tol' yer, I seh, who tol' yer? Dat's all I ax now, who tol' yer?"

"I is yer 'im myse'f," answered Jim; "he tel' Tom Black deh—didn't he, Tom? didn't Nelse Pullam seh Peter hatter fight er duel er back clean out?"

"Yes, he did, Peter," spoke up the negro addressed, who had been eagerly drinking in the conversation with open mouth, "yes, Jim ain't tellin' you no lie; Nelse did seh he gwine thoo you lak lightnin' is struck you. I don't want er mix up in it, but dat's whut Nelse seh!"

"Ef he ever do git in front er my 'volver," said Peter, obviously buoyed up by the negro's reference to Nelse's cowardice, "ef he do, you gwine yer suppin drap, dat's certain!"

"But, Peter," urged Jim, looking anxiously up the street as if he feared some one else would appear to claim the honor of acting as Peter's second—"but, Peter, you ain't le'me know yit kin I be secon'; what's de use'n waitin'? I want ter know so I kin git ready."

"I don't b'lieve Nelse Pullam want no duel," said Peter, with perverse evasion, and a shadow fell across his disfigured features. "Dat nigger wouldn't fight er rabbit."

"Well," persisted Jim, half despondently, "ef de is er duel, kin I be yo' secon'—des in case de is one, dat's all?"

"Yes," said Peter, doggedly; "but he won't fight now, you see."

"Yer come Bob Lash now," chimed in one of the dusky bystanders. Silence fell upon the group as a shiny-faced young darky, dressed in a dark suit and a long linen duster, turned the corner and strutted down the sidewalk to them.

"Dis is whar Mr. Peter Brown lives, is it not?" he said haughtily.

"You know yer in my house, Bob Lash," said Peter, significantly. "You is been yer at dinner time often enough. I reckon I is de man you out lookin' fer. I'm 'ight yer in my own ya'd, en I is been yer fer er hour."

"I wanter see you in private er moment," returned Bob, in a very dignified tone; "what I is gotter seh is des twix' us."

Peter turned toward the house and Bob followed him.

"I'm his secon'," said Jim. "Le'me go wid you; Peter may need my 'vice."

The dapper darky turned and smiled broadly and condescendingly upon the speaker.

"You mus' be very ignorant er de code, suh, er you wouldn't s'pose you could be er man's secon' 'fo' his 'ponent is sen' 'im er 'ficial challenge. I hatter repeat dat my affair is wid Mr. Peter Brown, en I come ter see 'im in private."

"Dat's so, Jim," said one of the bystanders, "dat's so, kase he des now come ter fetch de dare fum Nelse; let um go off an' you wait."

Jim and his two followers leaned upon the fence while Peter and his caller went into the cottage. Aunt Frances had slipped away to impart the exciting news to some near neighbors, and the men were alone.

Seating himself, Bob coolly and ostentatiously put his hand into the pocket of his coat and produced a much-soiled note.

"Mr. Brown," said he, in a declamatory tone, "I hab de honor ter fetch you dis 'munication fum my frien' Mr. Nelson Pullam, regardin' de lill 'sturbance you en 'im hat up at de warehouse w'en you wuz bofe liftin' at de cotton bale. It's er painful duty, but such things mus' happen sometimes twix' men wid honor."

Peter took the note in his trembling hand and raised the bandage from his swollen eye. He could not read a word, and yet he scanned the sheet critically. Bob was aware of his illiteracy, so he waited a moment, then said:

"I beg yo' pardon, suh, but de paper is blotted er lill, en I will read it fer you."

"Mr. Peter Brown.

"DEAR SIR:—Dis yer note will be han' ter you by my bes' frien'. I now dare you, en double dare you ter meet me on de fiel' er battle dis evenin'at fo' erclock at Frog Holler, close ter de spring.

NELSON PULLAM,

"Deacon in de Baptis' Chu'ch in good standin'."

Peter seemed petrified as he listened to the reading of the note.

"Did Nelse Pullam write dat? Did he? I des wanter know; did he? Dat's all, did he?" he exclaimed in abrupt, staccato sentences.

"I'm sorry ter 'fo'm yer dat dis yer is not Nelse Pullam's han'writin'. He cayn't write no better'n chicken tracks. Bein' ez he p'int me his second, I writ it fer 'im. He didn't know how ter fo'm er challenge; but long's I wuz wid the duel party las' mont', en am er ole han' at sech things, I know the code thoo and thoo."

"Nelse Pullam's de triflines' nigger in dis town. I'm a good min' ter tek er boa'd en go down deh on split it over his head—dat's whut I am!"

"See yer, Mr. Brown," protested Bob, "dis is no way ter transac' sech business ez dis. I is come fer yer ter 'cep' dis challenge er back out, one or turr—en hit's high time I wuz gwine."

"Who talkin' 'bout backin' out? You er fool, mister," blustered Peter, as he noted that Jim and his companions had approached the window on the outside and were eagerly listening to the colloquy. "You certney is clean gone out'n yo' head if you 'low I's erfeard er Nelse Pullam."

"Well, den," returned Bob, as he drew his wrinkled duster round him and stood up, "is you choose yo' second?"

Peter pretended to be too busy with his eye to hear him.

"He seh I may be in his secon'!" Jim shouted from the outside.

"Well, s'pose you come in en 'range fer de fight den, suh," replied Bob, getting into his garb of formality again. "I s'pose Mr. Brown is erlill upset wid de idea er tellin' his wife good-by fer good. Mebby he do need yo' 'vice."

Jim entered, followed closely by the two others, who slyly sneaked over against the wall to escape observation. Bob bowed ostentatiously to him, who greeted this unexpected ceremony with a look of surprise.

"I'm mos' happy ter meet yer," said the former, giving Jim his hand. "It is mo'n likely you never tuk part in er 'fare er honer befo', en may need some lill 'gestions yo'se'f. In Souf Ca'lina my ole master use ter git in um mos' every mo'nin' 'fo' breakfus, en he al'ays hat me erlong to wipe off his pistols en tote um back home atter he done kilt de man.

Sech matters is ve'y disagree'ble, but it seem lak de mus' happen sometime, lak sometime you des 'bleeged ter kill er pet pig w'en you is outer hog meat; blood is des gotter be spilt en dat end de trouble. My principal is off in de woods now practisin' wid his 'volver at er black spot on er tree, and des pawin' de groun', he's so mad."

Peter was standing before a little cracked mirror on the mantelpiece readjusting for the twentieth time the handkerchief about his head. Aunt Frances and three other colored women had stolen into the adjoining room, and were peering round the door-facing, with hanging lips and eager eyes.

"Dey don't want us in deh," muttered Aunt Frances, with a guttural chuckle. "You folks stay yer. 'Im gwine in en ax um do dey want er drink er col' well water. I do hope en pray dey'll fix it up so Peter kin fill dat long black dog wid buckshot."

She waddled into the room, smiling and bowing profusely to the assembly.

"'Scuse me, gen'men, please," she said; "I des 'trude mysef ter ax you will anybody 'fresh yo'sef wid er dipper er cool well water while you is waitin'?"

They all declined her invitation, and Peter, evidently relieved by her entrance, turned round and said:

"Frances, what I is tol' yer time en ergin tell I is done tired out—not er 'sturb me w'en I is busy?"

Without a word in reply, Aunt Francis waddled hastily from the room and joined her friends.

"Well, Mr. Banks," said Bob to Jim, as he coolly flicked a bit of ashes from his sleeve, "I s'pose it in order now fer you en me ter 'plete de 'liminaries ter give dese two defended men er chance fer destitution. It is fer y' all ter 'cide. Is it ter be er fight er er backout?"

"Fight!" answered Jim cautiously, emboldened by the knowledge of his own immunity from danger. "De ain't no backdown in dis house. Ef de is, I don't know my bes' fr'en'. Peter Brown 'u'd fight er buzz saw—now you yer me er talkin'. I'll write de note. Peter, is you gotter pen en ink handy?"

Peter was silent, but Aunt Frances cried out from the adjoining room:

"I'll git um, Jim," and she bustled in, producing the writing materials and placing them upon a table, remarking as

she did so: "Jim Banks, tell that black-livered skunk, Nelse Pullam, he better git ready ter hab silber put on his eyes."

"Frances," called out Peter, in a forced tone of anger, from the window, "whut I done tol' yer? What I done tol' yer 'bout you open yo' mouf a'lays at de wronges' time?"

She bustled out in haste, and Jim seated himself to write an acceptance of the challenge.

"Whut I mus' tell 'im, Peter?" he asked.

Peter was stretching his neck out of the window and did not appear to hear the question. Jim sat expectant, with his eyes fixed on his friend's mute, bent back, and allowed his mouth to fall ajar. The silence became awkward. Jim dipped the pen well down into the ink, stirring up the sediment in the bottom of the bottle.

"I b'lieve, on my soul," said Peter, in a half listless, half indignant tone, "I do b'lieve er hog is got in my turnip patch; de is some er de beatenes' hogs in dis yer town I ever seed. I'm er good min' ter tek down my gun en kill one or two des fer spite."

Bob Lash put on a semblance of disgust.

"I'm sho gittin' out er all patience wid you ge'men," he said; "dis de fus' time I ever witness sech perceedin's." He stood up, buttoning his flabby duster and swinging his hat and cane in his hands.

"Peter," pleaded Jim, "suppen hatter be done; you ain't er gwine ter back down?"

"Who seh I gwine back down?" asked Peter, jerking the bandage from his head and pretending to roll up his sleeves.

"Nobody ain't seh you gwine back down," said Bob, as he shifted a fresh cigar into the corner of his mouth and closed an eye to keep out the smoke. He shrugged his shoulders and then said to Jim: "Well, dat's all I want; y' all see Mr. Brown is 'cep' my frien's challenge, en all you is gotter do now, Mr. Banks, is ter write de note."

"What mus' I write?" asked Jim.

Bob puffed at his cigar a moment, then he dictated and Jim wrote:

"' Mr. Nelson Pullam, colored deacon in de big Bethel Chu'ch: Dear Suh—Dis will be han' ter you by my friend—no, hol' up—dat won't do, kase I gwine tek it myse'f ter save time. Go on: ' Dis will be han' ter you by yo' frien' en 'ficient second, Mr. Robert Thornton Lash, who will ac' fer me.' "

"No, I'm gwine ac' for Peter," interrupted Jim. "I'm his secon'."

"Dat's so, 'scuse me, des er slip er de lip; but go on wid de note; seh ter 'im: 'I'll meet you dout fail at the p'inted place. Countin' de way I feel at dis present writin', I know dat blood will be let out. I am, suh, yo' mos' erbedient servant——'"

"Peter," broke in Aunt Frances indignantly from her point of observation, "don't you sen' no sech er note ter dat stink-in' Nelse Pullam—'erbedient servant!'"

"Dat's all 'ight, Miz Brown," said Bob, as he folded the note and moved toward the door; "it des er lill matter er style, lak quality people do." Then to Peter: "Mr. Brown, I have de honor er bid you good-day, suh; we'll meet you in de holler; en less'n de sheriff git dis in de win', we'll hab satisfaction 'fo' de day is troo."

Peter seemed roused by the sudden idea that the officers of the law might interfere, and he said to Bob, who now stood bowing in the door:

"You tell Nelse Pullam I'll be on han' early. I'm al'ays ready fer his kin'."

At four o'clock the shady spot in the edge of the town called Frog Hollow held a peculiar gathering. Colored people of all shades, ages, and sizes hung around among the trees in whispering, speculating groups. Even a few red and blue gowns of women brightened the green background in the extreme edge of the spot. Peter and Jim sat on a fallen tree, and about fifty yards from them, on a stone, sat Nelse Pullam, a big revolver cocked ready in his hand. Bob Lash stood at his side, looking more important than ever and emitting perpetual clouds of cigar smoke.

"How you feel, Nelse?" he asked, looking at an old brass watch and then glancing up at the sun.

"Oh, I'm game ernough; you kin bet on dat," said the ebon knight, shuddering and looking over his shoulder furtively as a sudden breeze stirred a bush behind him. "I ain't er feared er no man dat ever seed de light er day."

"Well," said Bob, "I reckon it erbout time me en Jim is medger off de paces. No use in waitin'. So long!"

As the two seconds advanced midway between the two so-called duellists and began to step off the ground, every negro in view dodged out of sight behind a tree or stump.

Bob walked jauntily over to Nelse.

"All ready, Nelse," he said. "Come on en tek yo' stan'."

"Who tek what stan'?" asked Nelse. "Look yer, Bob, ef dat black nigger des dare—des dare ter come yer whar I is, I gwine put er ball in 'im. Now, you yer me! I'm er gwine ter set 'ight yer on dis rock, en ef he come—well, you des keep yo' eye open, dat's all!"

Jim had gone over to Peter and notified him that all was in readiness. Peter did not rise.

"You er fool, Jim Banks, ef you 'low I gwine out'n my way ter 'blige Nelse Pullam. He's de one dat sen' de challenge. I'm yer; en I'd des lak ter see 'im er anybody else make me move. See dat rock deh?" pointing in a stone weighing about five pounds; "ef Nelse Pullam des dare ter come nigh me, I'll sen' it at his head. I wouldn't even cock dis pistol."

"Shuh!" grunted Jim, disappointedly, and he turned away to meet Bob, who was leaving Nelse.

"My man's er lill tired wid de walk over yer," remarked Bob, indifferently. "I reckon we better wait er lill while on 'im."

"Peter say he hain't quite ready yit," returned Jim, mashing a troublesome mosquito on his cheek.

"Ter tell you de trufe, dough, Peter is er stric' chu'ch-member, en I 'clare I b'lieve Peter think it wrong ter kill Nelse, but he's er makin' up his min' es fas' ez er dog kin trot. He'll be ready in er minute; des now he look lak he wuz prayin' ter de Lawd ter tek Nelse's soul in han'."

Both men were awkwardly silent for a moment as they looked off over the tops of the trees where a few buzzards were circling toward the earth. The pause was ended by Bob.

"Look-y yer, Jim," he ventured in a confidential, experimental tone. "I like Peter Brown en he's gotter nice woman fer er wife—seem lak it er pity ter have his funeral ter-morrer; he's er man 'at might live fifty year yit ef he let erlone."

"Dat des 'zactly de way I feel 'bout Nelse," said Jim, with a cunning twinkle in his eye; "he's er lill bragsome en bull-heady, but he's er nice feller, tek im all in all."

"I wuz des er studyin'," went on Bob, "whut's de use er dese fellers shootin' one ernurr? Whyn't me en you des ez

well tek de balls out'n de pistols? Ef dey don't know no diffunce, it all de same."

"Dat's er mighty good plan," acquiesced the other with a face-marring grin, "en den de wouldn't be sech er likeliness er stray balls er flippin' roun' us; no tellin' how blamed crooked dese darkies might shoot ef dey once got started."

Accordingly the two seconds sat down out of sight of their two friends, and in a few moments they had picked the balls from the cartridges.

"Now dey'll do," chuckled Bob; "dey'll mek des de same fus' en dey won't be er bit er harm done. Now, Jim, I'm gwine hat dis duel er me 'n' you kin tek it up; what yer seh?"

"I'm wid yer," said Jim, and both of the men hastened to their principals. But no persuasion could induce the offended men to rise from their respective seats. At last the spectators began to venture nearer and nearer till a dozen or more stood around, indulging in raillery over the evident cowardice of the ones most concerned.

"Dis won't never do," said Bob to Jim, in an under tone; "de whole town is gwine be laughin' over dis; suppose we tell um de ain't no loads in de pistols, seem lak it de onlies' way now."

Jim consented and boh returned to their men.

"Peter," said Jim to his sulky friend in a whisper, "I wanter tell you suppen, en it mus'n't go er step funder: me en Bob Lash is tuk all de balls out'n de 'volvers so de cayn't be nobody hu't, en we is want some show er fightin' ter go off yer terday, kase de whole town 'll be er-laughin' en seh y'all bofe back down. Don't yer see (drawing a blank cartridge from the revolver), don't yer see it all 'ight?"

Peter pretended not to have heard Jim's remark. He rose to his feet hastily, grasping the revolver.

"Who seh I gwine back out?" he asked in a thunderous voice; "who dare ter tell me dat in my face? I'm ready en er-waitin'; show me whar ter stan'."

Nelse Pullam was also on his feet and advancing toward the selected spot. The astonished spectators scattered like the fragments of an exploded shell.

"Hurry up en git ready," said Nelse, drawing himself up to his full height and lightly toying with his revolver, as he stood, his right foot placed in front of his left. "Hurry up, I want dis done wid; it mos' sundown now."

"Now," said Jim, "w'en we count three, bofe mus' wheel roun' ez quick ez he ken en 'gin ter shoot, en shoot tell de las' ball out'en de pistols ef he be able ter pull de trigger."

"I objec'," protested Bob; "dat ain't 'cordin' ter de code; you mus' bofe des fire one shot erpiece, and den hole up ter see ef damage is been done er anybody is prepared ter 'pologize."

Nelse grunted in profound derision, and Peter echoed the grunt with increased resonance.

"Hol' up," said Jim, "I mus' speak ter you in private, Bob."

The two seconds walked a few paces away together.

"Don't yer see?" said discerning Jim in a perturbed whisper; "don't yer see dat all de shots mus' be fired or somebody might git er hol' er de pistols atter it over en find out dey is blank loads?"

"Dat's er fac'," answered Bob, "you is right." Then aloud to the others:

"Gen'men, de 'gestion er my brer secon' is er lill out de reg'lar run, but ez you bofe is so bent on blood, we is 'cide 'at you mus' shoot all de balls des ez you like. You kin tek yo' time er you kin pop um off lak er pack er fire-crackers."

The make-believe duellists began to quiver anew, but they held their revolvers out at arm's length in front of them and got ready to wheel round at the signal.

"W'en I git ter three," said Bob, "wheel en go at it. Now: One! Two! Three!"

They turned and began to fire. Nelse's revolver cracked five times, but Peter in his agitation managed to explode but one shell.

"Hol' up!" cried Bob, and the smoke rose. "Now it seem dat Mr. Brown is got fo' shots lef'; en 'cordin' ter de code he is got er right ter shoot um all in my man. So far it look lak nobody ain't hu't, but I boun' yer dem trees out deh is got many er load in um. Now de 'fair res' twix you two, en ef you kin mek saterfaction dout any mo' smoke en blood oll well en good; ez fer my part I think befo' you men is sho dat you is brave fum de wud go."

Peter raised his revolver majestically and rested it upon the branch of a bush in a direct aim at his opponent's broad breast.

"Nelse Pullam," said he in a deep, thrilling tone, "I is got

fo' mo' balls lef'; is you now willin', wid death en 'struction in yo' face, ter 'trac' whut you seh ter me w'en you 'low I is er liar?"

Nelse folded his arms calmly, and looking round upon the sun-lighted spot and up at the sky as if he were bidding farewell to earth, said: "Seem lak I'm yo' meat; I reckon I kin die lak er man; le'me hat 'im yer," putting his broad hand grandly upon his breast."

"I is got fo' mo' shots lef'," threatened Peter slowly, keeping a steady aim at Nelse and humping his shoulders by way of emphasis. "Is I er liar or not?"

"Let um come," said Nelse, closing his eyes.

"Sholy, gem'men, dis kin be settle'," interposed Bob. "You is bofe game, en hit do seem er burnin' shame ter hat one er sech two fine men laid out erbout er lill matter. Cayn't suppen be done?"

"I is got fo' mo' balls lef'," repeated Peter, looking along the barrel of his revolver, after he had spit upon his hand to take a fresh hold of the handle.

"I don't keer ef you gotter whole houseful er um," said Nelse. "Yer won't see me back down, Peter Brown; yer des let um come; I got my whack at you en miss, kase I been smokin' too much; now you do de same."

"Let 'im off dis time, Peter," advised Jim; "shoot de shots off in the air lak white folks does."

As if thankful for the suggestion, Peter slowly, magnanimously raised his revolver over his head, and bang! bang! bang! bang! went his blank cartridges.

"Now dat's er brave thing!" approved Bob. "Now shek han's lak men; I fer one is glad dis is settle'."

The two armed men threw down their weapons, and in an instant they were warmly shaking hands and laughing.

"Peter Brown, I 'low I is er brave man," said Nelse as they walked away followed by a motley procession of admirers.

"Yes, dat's so," admitted Peter, "en I 'low I is, too; I didn't feel er single shiver thoo de whole battle."

THE HORSES OF HANS GELYI

BY KOLOMAN MIKSZARTH

No Arab could be more devotedly attached to his fleet mare than Hans Gelyi, the Hungarian peasant, to the four matchless steeds he has reared. But all is naught to him—even life itself—once his wife's faithlessness becomes clear to his mind. Translated from the German version by Emma Huntington Nason for Short Stories.

First, the master decked Bokro's yellow-haired neck with ribbons of sea-grass; then he braided Tünder's night-black mane, and afterward, in turn, those of the other horses.

The four intelligent animals understood these preparations. Even the bells were hung on the bridles just as they were, a year before, on a like occasion when Hans Gelyi brought home the beautiful Klara Ver, the miller's widow, as his bride; and the horses arched their necks as proudly as though each one were the viscount's favorite steed.

But had they belonged to the Count Palatine himself, had they been fed with rose leaves from a golden crib, or watered out of silver buckets from the sacred fountain of Gozon, it could not have gone better with them than in the care of Hans Gelyi.

They were all four of his own raising; they had grown into strength and beauty under his own eyes. He had taken the entire care of them himself, and daily combed their silky sides with loving faithfulness. He had washed their grain, and even sifted it, before placing it before them. He had picked over the hay and the aftermath, taking out everything that was not palatable. In the winter he had protected them with warm coverings; in the summer he gave them cooling baths in the stream; and when they were young foals, he had even kissed them.

Now he no longer bestowed upon them this caress, especially since a little wife ruled in the house. But if he no longer kissed his horses, he still loved and breathed on them; and he would not have exchanged his four treasures for sixteen steeds of Bodok or Esolto.

And yet no matter how admirable may be the horses found in other parts of the world, they are not to be mentioned in comparison with these steeds that Hans scorned. In nine counties of Hungary they will tell you of their matchless

shape, their magnificent necks, their slender fetlocks, and their superb gait; and whenever a great lord wanted horses he always came to buy them of the peasants of Bodok or Esolto. Nowhere else in the world had there been such horses.

Now, however, all this was changed. Hans Gelyi had learned the secrets of their success, and had reared his four colts so wonderfully that when they flew through Bodok or Esolto, all the villagers rushed out together in astonishment; and the men were pale with envy.

At last, the manes of the four horses were braided, and Hans began to harness them. One strap was so knotted that he could hardly untangle it. The spirited steeds pawed impatiently with their dainty hoofs and lashed their sides with their splendid tails.

The stable door stood open; a beautiful woman, with cheeks of peach bloom, entered. She did not see Hans Gelyi. Raro's back and the grain-crib concealed him from her view. Nor would Hans have observed the woman had he not heard her whispered words—broken sentences which, at first, conveyed no meaning.

With whom could she be talking?

"Tell him that I, too, am going to the feast, but afterward—what will happen, I do not know."

This was Klara's voice. Hans heard it distinctly.

The answer, in hoarse, croaking tones, accompanied by much coughing, was, "God knows what." Hans could not understand; but Klara's low reply was plainly heard.

"Two mallow-roses shall I wear upon my bosom. Let him be—at the hemp-pools."

Raro's reins slipped from the hands of Hans Gelyi. The bridle, with its many rings, fell clinking to the floor; but he heard it not. It was something else that struck upon his ear:

"If I let the red rose fall by the roadside—then it will not do. But if I drop the white rose, he may come."

Hans Gelyi was scarcely able to harness the fourth horse. His heart beat violently; his hands seemed powerless; he did everything the wrong way. A dark foreboding filled his breast. He had heard this soft voice speak thus before.

Pshaw! A fool's notion! Should words frighten him? Should he see a shadow where there was no body? Should he make ready a white bed for the black cover of jealousy?

Somewhat comforted, he led out the harnessed horses to

the watering-trough. Klara, accompanied by a decrepit old woman, was just going out of the door.

"Who was that—the devil's grand-mother?" he asked jestingly.

"Frau Vöneki from the church parish."

"What does the old witch want of you?"

"The poor woman came to beg some yeast."

"Ha! so her ladyship kneads bread! Very good! but make haste, my Klara! We must now be off!"

The light wagon had already been drawn out of the shed and was standing in the yard. In a few minutes, the horses were attached, and Hans and Klara were on their seats.

The master swung his whip over the four mettlesome steeds; and the horses, sniffing the air with their inflated nostrils, danced out through the gates.

Hans gazed upon them; and as he beheld the four finely shaped heads, now bent to the breast, and now tossed proudly aloft, as he saw the copper rings glittering on the harness and the gay ribbons fluttering about the slender bodies, while the hard hoofs struck sparks of fire from the ground, his heart swelled with joy.

How glad he was that he had never sold his horses, in spite of many tempting offers! Only a short time before, Bodok and Esolto, alarmed for the reputation of their steeds, had united and raised four thousand gulden to buy his darlings.

Suddenly his glance turned from the horses to the beautiful face of his wife; from her rosy face to the snowy bosom; and from her snowy bosom to the two mallow-roses upon it—one red and one white.

Thus had she spoken; it was just as she had said.

Hans Gelyi let the long whip whiz over the four horses. The shaft-horse and the leader reared.

The beautiful woman arched her small, shapely hand to shade her false eyes, and gazed admiringly upon the landscape, as they sped on.

"I did not believe, Hans, that you would take me with you. I know you would rather not—for evil tongues have not ceased to busy themselves about me—and——"

Klara Ver expected that her husband would reply or ask some question; but he also gazed admiringly upon the scenery, the swiftly receding meadows, the approaching hemp-pools, which, with their green water, glistened like fiendish,

jeering eyes, and, farther on, the precipitous cliffs—those deep open coffins!

“And because I thought you would go directly from the wedding at Esillom’s to the morrow’s market.”

Even then Hans Gelyi answered not. Perhaps she would strike closer yet with her taunts—the traitress!

“Ah! how proud your grace has grown! Is it even beneath your highness’ dignity to speak? Tell me, how is it to be? Will you leave me behind, or take me with you?”

“I leave you behind,” he answered sternly; “the wedding lasts three days.”

They had now reached the hemp-pools.

Upon the field-path, in his tulip-embroidered coat and Sunday hat, walked Alex Esipke, who turned suddenly as if by chance, at the clattering of the wagon; and yet the very earth perceived it from afar, when Hans Gelyi’s famous horses dashed along!

But what are his horses to him now? He looked searchingly into his wife’s face. Ah! how her eyes sparkle! See! how she looks toward the handsome fellow—so longingly, so stealthily—with such a lingering, sweet glance! And—oh, woe!—her hand drops something! The white rose is no longer on her breast.

In Hans’ relaxing grasp, the reins fall loose and looser. Like the swift winds that drive the clouds, Gelyi’s horses rush madly on. They can no longer be called horses; their frightful speed whirls them together like black wings that fly—fly! They are no longer wings! They all are raging death!

“Pity! help! Oh, take the reins!” shrieked Klara Ver. “Here are the cliffs! O God! There is the precipice!”

“God curse thee!” cried Hans Gelyi. “Ah, surely he will curse thee!”

“Oh, seize the reins, my sweet husband, my master!”

He seized them; but his brain had reeled. A shrill, unearthly hiss escaped from his lips.

“Hussa Tünder! Hussa Raro!” Then he drew in the reins and, with superhuman strength, for an instant checked the frantic steeds—then, rising to his feet, hurled the reins over his horses’ heads as they plunged into the abyss.

ETCHING: DUTY AND PLEASURE

BY FRANCES CHAPMAN

We all know these two figures that beckon us hither and thither, and happy the mortal for whom their outlines are so blended that one is often mistaken for the other.

As I sit in front of my fire, in the red flames numberless pictures appear and disappear. Now I see a wide plain, green as the heart of an emerald. The sky in the West is aflame with golds and reds of the setting sun, fading and deepening like living things. Pinks and purples and greens drag my eyes and mind deeper into the sea of color as it mounts upward seeking to devour all the cold blue overhead; glorious colors that make me feel in touch with eternity. Beyond the plain the trees of a forest sway their branches in the breeze, reflecting red from the smooth surface of their leaves.

Here two figures stand apart. One is clothed in a garment black as the impenetrable night, and, from the dark veil, which covers her head, looks a face beautiful as a marble image. The large soft eyes are heavy with sorrow, but the beautiful mouth is set in an expression of firm and cruel command. One white hand holds back the veil, and the lines of that hand against the sombre background bespeak a strength that makes one tremble. A diadem of jewels rests on her broad brow and gleams and sparkles with the colors of the sky. Her eyes search the forest unceasingly.

Poised on one foot the other figure, smaller and delicate as a roseleaf, seems about to float in the air. A white veil, which glows and burns like an opal, is thrown around her. Roses are in her hair and drop their fragrant petals at her feet. Her shining eyes are as cold and as blue as a northern sky and her hair like strands of twisted gold. Her full red lips curve in an alluring smile, and her small hands and delicately rounded arms, rosy in the sun-rays, move in graceful rhythm, which is music unheard. She too looks toward the forest.

At last a maiden creeps trembling from the shadow of the trees; she turns her head from side to side like a hunted hare. Both figures advance to meet her. She gazes timidly from one to the other—a dull blot as she stands between them. One whispers Duty and the other Pleasure. The fire is burning low, the picture is fading.

LIEUTENANT LOUISA

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE

An impecunious lover and a stern and wealthy parent are the adversaries in the old game of a love affair. The opportune discovery, by the hero, of the right of the mollified father to a dormant peerage, and the timely intercession of a providential aunt, bring the struggle to a happy and satisfactory issue. Copyright by the Louisville Commercial.

Some years ago I occupied the set of chambers in the Temple, London, that are generally associated with the names of Pendennis and George Warrington. Four windows look out upon the Garden Court, the Fountain, and the Middle Temple Hall. The rooms are among the pleasantest in London. A Mr. James Burnett (a stranger to me) lived in the apartment ascribed to George Warrington; the remaining five rooms of the set accommodated two friends of mine—Edward Bold, a barrister in fair practice, and his younger brother, a student at Charing Cross Hospital, one of the brightest, cheeriest lads I ever knew. We had a small kitchen in common, and were ministered unto by a couple of venerable ladies—Mrs. Swatman, a globular spinster of about sixty, and her associate and assistant, a widow of mysterious age. Those two excellent personages were a source of vast entertainment to us. Mrs. Swatman would announce, with the greatest gravity: "*We* want some new shirts," or "*We* shall need a new great-coat this winter," or "Don't you think *we'd* better get in some coals?" Speaking of Edward Bold she once said to me, "We've been together seven years now!" I am afraid that Mrs. Swatman regarded me with mild contempt. She had "done for" barristers all her life, and was possessed with the notion that other men were for the most part suspicious characters. Her misgivings regarding me were somewhat allayed by the discovery that I wrote for one or two newspapers and magazines; many of "the gentlemen," as she phrased it, having engaged in similar pursuits. She was, at all events, a faithful, industrious, and admirable old creature, and, compared with the average Temple laundress, a jewel among washerwomen.

Her weekly "book" was a fearful and wonderful sight. The handwriting required as much and as serious study as would have qualified me to decipher cuneiform inscriptions

with ease; and the theory of orthography affected by the scribe was—whatever else might be said of it—delightfully straightforward and unsophisticated. “Kollurd bred,” “stak,” “shuger,” “corfy,” are examples that occur to me of her achievements in this direction; and there was also a mysterious item, which cropped up every now and then, under the name of “faggits.” Regarding this last, curiosity and a proper sense of economy conspired at length to make me request an explanation. “Mrs. Swatman,” I said, “how is it I burn so much wood? I see half a crown constantly for faggots; surely there must be some mistake!”

“Lor’ bless you, sir,” was her reply, with an indulgent chuckle at my opacity, “that ain’t faggots, it’s ‘forgets!’”

One afternoon Edward Bold came into my room to ask me whether I cared to go to some private theatricals. Now, I hold private theatricals to be little better than public nuisances; nevertheless, after duly considering the possible contingent advantages of the enterprise, I decided that go I would; and in the course of a day or two I received a card from “Lady Barracoot, at Home Thursday, June 19th;” and when the Thursday in question came around, I presented myself at Lancaster Gate.

The performance was to consist of an opening farce—its name has escaped my memory—and Mr. Arthur Sketchley’s comedy, “How Will They Get Out of It?”—and that I shall never forget. The farce bored me; the actors were imperfect; and in looking forward to the comedy which was to succeed, I rapidly came to the conclusion that it would be anything but a success, and that “they” never would “get out of it.” But there is an end to all things, even to a farce played by amateurs; and after some tiresome delay, which an exhibition of pyrotechnic pianoforte-playing rendered still more intolerable, the curtain rose on the comedy.

I was familiar with the piece and remembered too well the original cast—Charles Matthews and his wife, Mrs. Stirling, Frank Matthews and his wife, Montague and Miss Wentworth. Indeed, I had been present at the rehearsal when the piece was originally produced at the St. Dennis Theatre in 1864, and learned every bit of “business” by heart, so that my forebodings on the present occasion were gloomy; and they were in a large measure justified. The piece was for the most part indifferently played; but one assumption

was, as a well-known dramatic critic would say, "adequate." The part of Jessy Ashton, originally taken by Miss Wentworth, was brightly and intelligently rendered by a young and pretty girl whose name, the bill informed me, was Mary Bruce. A fair Scotch lassie she was, with a mass of auburn hair shot with gold; a broad, fair brow giving promise of good sense; dark eyebrows and eyelashes and serene blue eyes through which looked forth the soul of a frank and fearless maiden. The nose was small and straight, the upper lip short and sensitive, the complexion bright, and the whole woman wholesome, lightsome, and delightful. She seemed to me, in fact, the perfection of all that is feminine; and I made up my mind that when the performance was over I would seek an introduction to her, and I lost no time in asking Edward Bold whether he would act as my sponsor.

"Delighted, my dear fellow," was his reply; "I've known her ever since she was so high, and she's as good as the gold in her hair. And, by the by," he added, as he took my arm to lead me to her, "her father is Campbell Bruce the Q. C., a widower with two children; his chambers, you know, are on our staircase—first floor."

The necessary formalities were then gone through with, and in the course of the evening I had several opportunities of talking to Miss Bruce; and I succeeded (much to the disgust of several ineffective young whipper-snappers) in taking her down to supper. It turned out that her brother, who was in the navy, had once stopped a few days with me on my station in New Zealand—for I had been the victim of a disastrous speculation in sheep in that colony, and had succumbed, with hundreds of other unfortunates, to the hard times which commenced in 1868 and culminated in 1870. I may remark in this connection (though I said nothing about it to Miss Bruce) that, with the exception of a life interest in a sum of £5,000, I had lost every farthing I had in the world. Later in the evening I was presented to Mr. Bruce, a massive, stern-looking man of perhaps fifty-two. He had a judicial air with him which gave one the impression that his life had been passed in weighing evidence and finding it wanting. But when he found that Bold and I were old friends, and that his son had been my guest at Ruataniwha, he was good enough to ask me to call on him in Inverness Terrace.

"Come some Sunday afternoon," he said; "we are always

at home then, and I shall be glad to have some conversation with the man who was hospitable to my boy in New Zealand."

I need not say that I felt sincerely grateful to Carnegie Bruce for having smoked my tobacco and drank my whiskey in the antipodes. I accepted Mr. Bruce's invitation, and a few Sundays afterward I went to Inverness Terrace. The afternoon passed away rapidly, and I was requested to stay to dinner. You will not be surprised to hear that I did so. The fact is that (as Bold had been thoughtful enough to tell me beforehand) Mr. Bruce had a foible. He had for years been endeavoring to establish his claim to the dormant peerage of Dunedin; and once mounted upon that hobby it galloped away with him. I was so successful in my encouragement of his amiable weakness that he took quite a fancy to me, and was pleased to declare that I was a man of sound sense and that it was a pity I had not studied for the bar. After dinner we reorganized the navy, reconstructed the ministry, settled the French question, placed the army on a proper footing, and solved the Irish land problem, all in the space of five-and-forty minutes—the quickest time on record—and then I cordially acceded to Mr. Bruce's suggestion that we should join Miss Bruce in the drawing-room. The worthy gentleman retired into a corner to read a book, and I was left to make myself acceptable to Miss Mary.

I flatter myself that few men are greater adepts than I at the twin arts of being agreeable or disagreeable. I soon discovered that my lovely hostess was by no means devoid of a certain spice of humor. In truth, she was overflowing with spirits and gayety; and I left the house that night as far gone in love as a man may be. On my walk to my chambers I made up my mind that Miss Bruce was a girl who, under any circumstances, could be trusted to "run straight;" that her past was an unsullied page; that she was as innocent as she was pretty and as clever as she was innocent.

Of course I had determined, long before I ever heard of Mary Bruce, that under no circumstances would I allow myself the luxury of falling in love. But love, unfortunately, is like measles; it comes and it goes, and there is no help for it. Accordingly I fell madly in love with Mary Bruce; we met at parties; I dined occasionally at Inverness Terrace; and at last, one day, at a water party, I came to grief; all my stern resolutions vanished—and I proposed.

We had gone by the G. W. R. to Henley, a party of eight. There were Miss Bruce and her aunt, a married sister of Mr. Bruce, two daughters, the two Bolds and myself. He had arranged to lunch at the Red Lion, Henley; thence to row leisurely to Marlow, dine at the Complete Angler, and go home by the last train. It was a baking July day, tropically hot, but bright and glorious, reminding me of Honolulu or Levaka more than of muggy England. After lunch we paddled quietly down through Hambledon Lock to Medenham, by which time the Bolds had developed strong, if not original views as to shandy-gaff. We strolled about the abbey, and made much fun of its bogus character; had a game at romps with the pretty children of mine host of the Ferry Hotel, and then rowed on to Henley Lock, which was then in a disgraceful state of disrepair. The Bolds went off to pay a flying visit to some friends of theirs who lived at the mill house, close to the lock. While the water was running off, Mary Bruce, who was in charge of the hitcher aft, allowed the boat to come too close to the sill, and suddenly the stern was lodged on the top of a broken pile.

In ten seconds the boat would have been overturned, and we should have been shot into the lock. But Mary retained her presence of mind. With a vigorous shove of the hitcher she pushed the stern of the boat off the pile, and by the greatest good luck we avoided what must have been a most serious catastrophe. Even as it was, we got athwart the lock and nearly came to grief. This episode has been thus particularly referred to because it was the one that settled me. I made up my mind as we rowed down to Bisham after exploring the backwater at Warleyford and the tumbling bay at New Lock, that I would that day ask Mary to be my wife. That she liked me I felt sure; but whether her liking had developed into love, whether she would entertain my proposal, or whether my proposal would entertain her, I knew not. But I was fully resolved to put the matter to the proof; I would risk it if I could get the opportunity to do so—and opportunities can be manufactured.

We landed at Bisham to look at the church and inspect the fine old monuments of the Holy Family and others, for which Bisham is celebrated. Then I proposed that the Bolds should scull Mrs. Macfarlane, who was tired, down to Marlow while I took the girls through the quarry woods to the point, and

back over the meadows to Marlow. *L'homme propose*. He does indeed! I, for example, proposed to ask Miss Bruce to be my wife, and that was the only proposition that came off. Whether Mary had given the Macfarlane girls a hint, or whether those young ladies (how I hated them!) acted of their own volition, I do not know; but they were limpets. Or rather, taking into consideration their lanky and flaccid structure, they were barnacles. They stuck to us with the pertinacity of ungorged and unsalted leeches, and gave us no chance of a moment's uninterrupted talk, until at length they landed us at the Complete Angler. Fortunately the dinner was a good one, or my faculty for making myself unpleasant would have been abundantly exercised.

After dinner I persuaded the Macfarlanes and the Bolds to go up to the town to see the house where Shelley lived, and where he was visited by Byron. Mary had once before made a pilgrimage to that shrine, and so had I. Mrs. Macfarlane's view inclined more to forty winks than to poetical associations, and she at last fell asleep in her arm-chair. Mary and I sat on the lawn for some minutes and watched the passing boats. Neither of us seemed to have many remarks to offer. Finally I asked her whether she would cross the road and inspect Mr. Borque's garden. She consented with some diffidence.

"It isn't right to leave aunty," she said. "What will she say if she wakes up and finds that we are gone?"

I felt inclined to say, "Oh, bother aunty!" Instead of that I explained that five or six minutes would serve to walk around the garden, so that our absence was not likely to be noticed. We crossed the road and entered the inclosure.

When a man does a thing for the first time in his life he is apt to be awkward about it. For the life of me I did not know how to begin. I was as nervous as a recruit under fire for the first time; my heart thumped away as if it didn't like the business, and was anxious to get out and away. What I did possessed, at all events, the charm of unconventionality.

I grasped Mary's hand suddenly, and before she had time to utter a word I said, looking her straight in the face:

"Mary, will you give me a kiss?"

She blushed violently; she returned my point-blank look, and what she saw in my eyes apparently satisfied her, for in a moment I was hugging her to my breast, and sealing our troth with a loving kiss.

How happy I was! Happy? I felt as if Heaven itself had been opened to me. And she?

"Charlie," she said (I had always hated the name before, but how sweet it sounded now), "Charlie, my darling! I never thought you—do you really love me?"

One more kiss—the last I got for many a long and weary day—and we went back to the hotel. The others had not returned. Mrs. Macfarlane was just awake.

"I should like some tea, Mary," she said.

Tea! Ambrosia—nectar—was more in my way. I could scarcely realize that Mary cared for me. But I was happy beyond measure. As to the future—what was to come of it all—a fico for the future! How we got back to town I have no recollection. A four-horse coach, perhaps, or a balloon was our vehicle. All I know is that Mary was sitting opposite me, her blessed eyes ever and anon meeting mine and giving me assurance of love. The Bolds and I saw them off at last in Mrs. Macfarlane's carriage, and then we returned to the Temple. I must have been very incoherent.

"What jolly girls the Macfarlanes are!" Edward remarked.

"She is lovely!" I replied.

"She? Who?"

"Why, all of them," I ventured.

And then, in fear lest I should betray myself, I suddenly remembered an appointment at the Lotus Club, and went off on a long walk. Involuntarily I found myself in Inverness Terrace, gazing up at the drawing-room windows. They were up, but there was no sign of Mary. I trudged away down the Bayswater Road, across Addison Road to Kensington, and so back to the Temple. I shut myself into my room, lighted my lamp, and tried to read.

Suddenly a grim shadow crossed my mind. Mr. Campbell Bruce. What would he say to all this?

He was reputed to be wealthy, and I knew he was proud. What would he think? Was it likely that he would give his daughter to a man whose miserable income was but two hundred and fifty pounds a year and what he could earn as a guerilla of the press? Was it likely?

It was not. No use blinking the fact. It was improbable in the highest degree. Expectations, even, I had none. The only person who was at all likely to leave me any money was my aunt Johanna; and she, good soul, was as tough as a

grenadier and as long-lived as a parrot. Her personal appearance, moreover, reminded one of that beaky fowl. Out of a clear three thousand a year she spent about five hundred, so that her accumulations must, I knew, be large, and her income increasing year by year. But would she make me an allowance? that was the question. Or would she—— But no! I knew the old lady too well. She was as tenacious of her money as a dog of a bone, and as proud of it as a cook of her copper. Once, when I was in a scrape at Oxford, I had applied to her. Her reply was characteristic.

“VILLA CAMPANARE, NICE.

“MY DEAR CHARLES: If I were to accede to your request for £30, I should be doing you a great wrong. By having to get out of your scrapes yourself, you will learn to avoid them and acquire self-reliance. Thirty pounds, my dear Charles, is a sum of money. Avoid debt and you will be spared what cannot but be painful to you. Read the inclosed.

“Your affectionate aunt,

“JOHANNA.”

The “inclosed” was some horrible trash about a man who came to London with twopence and died with a million. As to £30 being a sum of money—what did she suppose I imagined it to be—a sack of potatoes?

Well, the recollection of this incident failed to dispel my present misgivings, and that night I wrote to Mary telling her that I would see her father at once, but that, until I had done so, she was to keep our engagement secret, and I went to bed with despair at my heart.

I tossed about all night, and had but short and fitful intervals of sleep. In the morning I was in a high state of fever, varied by fits of shivering, and pains all over me. I sent a telegram to my doctor and then went back to bed.

For three months I was laid up with a dangerous rheumatic fever. In the early stage I had found it necessary to take Edward Bold into my confidence, and he had regularly conveyed tidings of me to Mary, who, poor girl, suffered grievously for my sake. Her messages gave me heart and strength, but my prostration was great and the paroxysms of pain frequent; at last the muscles of the throat were affected, and I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep. Laudanum was administered in large and increasing doses, and brought me some temporary relief, but I overheard my dear friend George

Vivian, my doctor, say one day: "If he is not better in forty-eight hours, it is all over with him."

My aunt Johanna was not the sole possessor of the parrot constitution. It ran in the family. Therefore, near to death as I was, I made up my mind that I would pull through.

I began to mend; slowly but surely the improvement went on, and in due time I became so far convalescent as to be able, with assistance, to get from one room to another. A new trouble now loomed in my horizon. On looking into the state of my finances I made the unpleasant discovery that, after settling various liabilities incurred by my illness, I should be left with a balance of not more than ten or twelve pounds at Praedi, out of which there would be a heavy chemist's bill to pay. My dividends were not due until December, and I was debarred from forestalling them by the provisions of the will under which I obtained them, and which forbade me to "assign, charge, or encumber" the property under penalty of seeing it depart into the clutches of a distant connection. Not without much reluctance, therefore, I resolved to write to my aunt Johanna and ask her to come to my assistance. After I had done this, a feeling of conditional resignation came over me. I had swallowed my pride; and such a dose, after all the other nostrums I had been taking, ought to bring about some improvement in my unlucky state.

The same day on which I wrote this letter to my aunt I was enlivened by a call from Mr. Bruce. He had looked in on me several times during my illness, and had made the kindest inquiries as to my progress. He now sat down on the other side of my fireplace, and we had a long conversation about genealogies, and before he took his leave I had become tolerably well acquainted with the story of the famous Dunedin peerage, and with the efforts Mr. Bruce had made during twenty years past to make good his claim to the title. One link, however, and only one, was still wanting to the completion of the chain of evidence forged with so much perseverance. It was necessary to prove the marriage of Dalrymple Bruce and Tryphena Maddams, a runaway couple who were supposed to have been united in matrimonial bonds somewhere about the year 1794. Their marriage certificate had been advertised for, and a large reward offered for it in every newspaper in the three kingdoms. Hundreds of registers had been personally inspected; but the much-desired

entry had never been discovered. Gradually, as I listened to my visitor's narrative of his baffled but still hopeful efforts, something of his own enthusiasm and eagerness in the pursuit communicated itself to me; probably I was in a more than usually impressionable state, owing to the bodily weakness caused by my illness; but, at all events, when I put my hand in his at parting, I felt that I sympathized with him heartily, and that, had it been in my power, I would have assisted him so far as in me lay.

"And who knows but I might be able to assist him?" I said to myself after he had gone. "There are more reasons than one why it would be desirable to put Mr. Bruce under an obligation. Mary! Mary! what if the discovery of your great-great-grandmother's marriage register were to bring about the creation of our own! O Mary! I wish I might see you now! I shall never be quite my own man again until the light of your sweet eyes has shone on me once more. Ah, me! if it were possible! well, and why not?"

This last thought made me sit upright in my chair and draw quicker breath. Why not, indeed? I never did have overweening respect for the proprieties and conventionalities of Mrs. Grundy. Mary's face and figure, Mary's voice, and Mary's eyes as I had seen them that last happy day at Marlow haunted me ever. It was really intolerable that we should be kept apart. I could not muster up courage to speak to her father now, since my worldly prospects were even more unpromising than before; and since, moreover, the long sickness which had reduced me to a skeleton had taken out of me the greater part of such audacity as I had ever possessed. No, I could not speak to Mr. Bruce, though it was certainly my duty to do so. But, after thinking over the matter all night and part of the next day, I did something which, from one point of view, requires more audacity still. I wrote to Mary. I wrote her a long, passionate letter, begging her to come to see me if only for five minutes. It was wrong but I could not help it. Mrs. Crump posted the letter.

The following day I sat beside my fire in a state of feverish expectation. Every knock at the door sent the blood flooding to my heart, and of course every one who had any business message or parcel for me must needs choose that day of all days to call. But at three o'clock precisely Mrs. Swatman came in with a mysterious air.

"A lady to see you, sir."

At last! Oh, it was too much happiness to be true! With the help of my two sticks I raised myself up and hobbled to the door in an ecstasy of delight. The green baize screen was pulled aside, and in a moment I was in the arms of—my aunt Johanna.

I must confess that I wished my aunt Johanna at Nice, or even in some warmer climate; and my welcome of her (when I had realized the situation) was as unenthusiastic as if she had been a pressing dun or a defaulting washerwoman. Nevertheless, my aunt turned up trumps—turned up, in fact, what is styled a "regular fistful." Her address and behavior were tender and even caressing to a degree that I had never expected from her; she had compassion for my past miseries and sympathy for my present condition. She quietly upbraided me for having kept her so long in ignorance of my misfortune; she declared that I ought to have some one who belonged to me to look after me, and, in short, she showed herself in a light so different from that in which I had heretofore regarded her that I took shame to myself for the hard thoughts that I had sometimes harbored against her.

"And now, my dear Charles," said this excellent woman, after about half an hour's conversation, sitting up and feeling in her pocket, "and now I have brought you one or two things which I am sure will do you good. Dear me! where is it? Oh, in my reticule, of course! No, don't get up, Charles; I prefer to get it myself. There! What do you think of that?"

"It looks like a—like a raw potato," I said, after examining the object which she smilingly handed to me.

"A kidney potato—yes; and I am certain it is one of the right sort, for I got it out of my own garden. I got it especially for you."

"That was very good of you, aunt," I replied, in as cordial a tone as my surprise would permit me to assume. "Is it to be roasted, or am I to eat it boiled?"

"Eat it! Good gracious Charles, do you suppose I brought you that potato to eat?" cried my aunt in undisguised astonishment. "It is a kidney potato, I tell you—a sovereign remedy against rheumatism! You are to keep it in your pocket night and day." (I infer from this that my maidenly

relative was under the impression that men slept in their trousers, and possibly that they were born in them.) "If you had only applied to me in time, you see, you would have been spared all this dreadful illness. But put it in your pocket. It will at all events secure you against the future."

And hereupon my aunt went into a long disquisition on the merits of the kidney potato from a medicinal point of view, and recapitulated innumerable cases of cures effected by it which had come under her own personal observation. At least I believe she talked about these things, but truth compels me to admit that I listened to as little of it as I could. Finally, however, I became aware that she had paused, and was searching in her reticule for something else. This time she produced a check-book.

I now regarded her movements with a respectful interest which was no longer feigned. What a methodical woman she was, to be sure! I am convinced that nobody ever took so long a time to perform so simple a function as my aunt Johanna took to write that check. She got her spectacles out of the case, rubbed them with her handkerchief, settled them and resettled them upon the lofty bridge of her aristocratic nose. Then she carefully opened the magic volume in which indefinite wealth lay latent, and heedfully smoothed down the slender pink leaves. With suspicious scrutiny she selected a pen from among the bundle which I placed at her hand, dipped it cautiously in the ink bottle, squared herself at the table, with straight back and corrugated brow, and so began to trace the few but pregnant words that were to place me on even terms with the world.

It was precisely at this juncture that a brisk knock came at the door, and the door was opened. I felt that I turned pale. But, no—it was not Mary; it was the doctor. He was just the man for the occasion—quick-witted, audacious, and intrepid. My horizon cleared again. I saw my way.

I presented him to my aunt, whispered a word to him aside, and he sat down. After exchanging half a dozen general remarks he turned to me and exclaimed briskly:

"Now, my dear boy, are you ready?"

"Quite ready, doctor."

"Madame, I presume, has no objection?" continued the doctor, as he extracted an imposing-looking case of instruments from his pocket.

"Eh?" said my aunt, settling her spectacles inquisitively.

"Only the examination," returned the doctor, "a mere nothing; now, then, my boy, off with your shirt—quick!"

"Eh!" cried my aunt, jumping up in dismay, "his shirt?"

"Oh, the back and chest will, I think, be sufficient; if we need to look at the legs we can——"

"Gracious goodness!" gasped my aunt, reddening to the forehead, "let me go—show me the way out at once—I never could think of being present at—my dear Charles, why didn't you tell me? how could you suppose——"

"This way, aunt, this way," said I, with difficulty maintaining my gravity, while at the same time taking shame to myself for the ruse I was playing off on her. "A thousand thanks to you, aunt; it is unfortunate that the interruption should have come at this time; but doctors, you know——"

"I understand, of course," she answered, pressing through the doorway and venturing to face me only when she was on the landing outside. "And I was going, at any rate, in a moment, and I only wanted to tell you, my dear nephew, that—that I am your aunt, and that I intend—that is, that you may expect—I mean, that you need not fear—in short, it will be all right! And so, my dear, good-by and God bless you!" And with this the best of relatives kissed my unworthy cheek and hurried down-stairs.

"Fine old lady, that!" observed the doctor, when I hobbled back to the room.

"The world does not contain her equal—for her age!" I replied. "And now, my dear doctor, all I have to ask of you is to follow her example."

"What! write you a check for £50!" exclaimed he. "Not me!"

"I expect nothing so sensible of you. What I want is to be left alone. Solitude is to be my medicine for this afternoon."

"Oh!" ejaculated the doctor, smiling with an arch twinkle in his eye. "Well, I'm off; but mind you, no more aunts of an age, or I'll order you mustard-plaster and tartar-emetic!" And, with this threat and a laugh, he took his leave.

"And now," said I to myself, sinking back in my chair, "of course Mary won't come, after all."

But I was mistaken; she did come, and she came in the most natural and unsensational way in the world. She came

—she was in the room—for a moment she was in my arms, and then all my doubts and troubles were forgotten, and I felt as if our long separation had been but a weary dream.

“My own darling Mary!”

“Charlie, my love! how thin you are! I am so glad!”

“That I am so thin?”

“O Charlie——”

Well, we were very happy. I was almost afraid to love her as much as I did, and yet I knew that I could never love her as much as she deserved. We were together and we were happy; that was all that either of us knew or cared. But at last Mary decided that I must light the gas.

“For,” said she, “how can you pretend to say you love me if you cannot see my face?”

“I do not love you for your face.”

“Do you really love me?”

“Love you! I—O Mary!”

“But I am so stupid.”

“You must be the cleverest of women.”

“Why?”

“Because you can find something worth loving in me.”

“Light the gas, sir!”

“First, then, one more. The matches are on the mantelpiece; you can light the gas yourself, if you will. I wash my hands of it.”

The gas was lighted. Soon after the Middle Temple clock struck five in its most aggressive tone.

“My father is dining at the Freemasons’ Tavern to-night,” said Mary, “and he is going to dress at his chambers; so I can stay ever so long yet—if you will let me.”

“If you stay here till I ask you to go, Mary, you may make up your mind to leave as an old woman.”

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when I heard the outer door open. There is a series of four doors between my rooms and the outer passage. A heavy footstep sounded between the first door and the second. Mrs. Swatman or her assistant imbecile had evidently neglected to safeguard the approaches, and here was some intruder forcing himself in.

“Mary,” I cried, “for Heaven’s sake—into my bedroom—quick!”

She appreciated the urgency of the occasion and vanished. Just as the door was closing upon her, in walked her father.

"Come, I'm glad to see you looking so much better," said he in a hearty voice. "Why, you've quite a color!"

Not a doubt of it. In fact I felt as though my face might be the tint of a tomato. Luckily Mary, when she came in, had not taken off any of her things except her sealskin jacket, and that she had snatched up and carried away with her when she escaped.

"Thank you. Yes, I'm getting better," was my reply.

"That's right! I'm very glad to hear it. I've something to talk to you about—something I think you can do for me when you're able to get about, which will give you what I'm sure will be beneficial to you—change of air and scene."

Then, taking a chair beside the fire (the very one in which Mary had just been sitting), Mr. Bruce proceeded to unfold his plans. He must have thought that my illness had rendered me extremely fidgety, for it was with the greatest difficulty that I could keep still, or even pretend to be listening. I was on tenter-hooks for poor Mary. The weather was cold, and there was neither fire nor fireplace in my bedroom. I knew, moreover, that she would be able to distinguish the tones of her father's voice, and the discomfort and distress of her position worried me so much that every other consideration was dwarfed in the comparison. All this, however, did not prevent Mr. Bruce from stating his belief that the marriage of Dalrymple Bruce and Tryphena Maddams had been solemnized in the county of Berkshire, and most probably in the vicinity of Abingdon. At any rate, the information gained led to the inference that the ceremony in question had taken place at a church in one of the riverside towns of Berkshire. His proposal to me was that I should undertake to make a thorough search among the parish registers, Mr. Bruce paying all the expenses and compensating me for my labor at the rate of a guinea and a half a day.

While he was talking, Mr. Bruce had involuntarily taken up an old woollen glove, which I kept on the top of the coal-box by the fireside to put on when shovelling out coal for the fire. It was as grimy as Mrs. Swatman's hands—the *ne plus ultra* of honest dirt; and before I noticed what he was about, his fingers were as soiled as those of a finance agent.

"Oh, what a nuisance!" exclaimed Mr. Bruce. "Dear me! I'll just step into your bedroom and wash." He rose and approached the door.

"No! No!" said I hurriedly, and laboring out of my chair under the influence of abject terror. "No! Here! Let me fetch the basin in here for you!"

"Nonsense; couldn't think of troubling you; know my way!" he answered amicably, motioned me back to my seat with one hand, while he opened the door with the other, and before I could say or do anything further to prevent him Mr. Bruce had entered the bedroom.

If a benevolent earthquake would kindly have made a meal of me at that moment how grateful I should have been. In a state of mind which I do not care to analyze I waited the inevitable explosion. A long second passed away—an everlasting minute—and there was no sign. What had happened? Could Mary have contrived to hide herself anywhere? I tried to reflect. There was a large, deep cupboard in the room that served as a wardrobe. Surely Mary had not had the presence of mind to conceal herself there? Yet it was the only place I could think of into which she could have retired; there was no other solution of the mystery. In a few minutes Mr. Bruce returned with clean hands and unruffled demeanor. Manifestly he had seen nothing and suspected nothing. He resumed the conversation where he had left it off, and after some further talk it was agreed that I should start for Berkshire as soon as the doctor would authorize me to leave the house; first, however, calling on Mr. Bruce to receive his written instructions and a check on account for whatever I thought I should need. Then, at last, my benefactor took his leave, and I hailed his departure as I should that of the gout. I hastened to the bedroom.

"Mary!" I called. "Mary!"

No answer. I searched the cupboard.

She was not there.

I looked behind the curtain, in a forlorn hope that she might have hidden herself there. No Mary. By what magic had she disappeared? I went down on my hands and knees and peered under the bed. Two overland trunks and a boot-jack, but still no Mary.

I summoned Mrs. Swatman.

"Miss Bruce—where is she?" I demanded.

"Do you mean the lady, sir?"

"Yes—the lady—Miss Bruce."

"She's gone, sir."

"I see she's gone, but how did she go?"

"I let her through Mr. Burnett's chambers, sir."

"Through Mr. Burnett's chambers!" I repeated in amazement. "How did you manage that?"

"Why, sir, through the door——"

"What door?" I interrupted impatiently.

"The door that leads from your bedroom into his sitting-room, sir."

There was a door, by my bedside, which was always locked, and for the key of which I had always been going to ask, thinking it was another cupboard. Through this door Mary had escaped. How thankful I was now that it had not been a cupboard. It turned out that Mrs. Swatman occasionally used the door when Burnett was away and I was engaged; and that in this instance, the laundress having called, Mrs. Swatman had gone in that way, and had happily been in time to release Mary from her embarrassing predicament.

I blessed Mrs. Swatman, and did not, as I had fully intended, give her a good blowing up for admitting Mr. Bruce when she knew I was engaged. She did not know, by the way, that I was "engaged" in the common acceptation of that term. I blessed her, therefore, and furthermore presented her with a sovereign, which made her happy for the rest of the week—honest old descendant of Cinderella that she was!

Next morning by the first post I had a letter from Mary. She had been "terribly frightened," poor darling; she had not fully realized the impropriety of coming to my chambers until her father had come upon the scene, and she had felt the dread of discovery. I must "never again ask her to be so foolish and wicked," she said. In my answer I promised not to be selfish any more, acquainted her with her father's plans, and pointed out that if I were successful we might perhaps hope to approach Mr. Bruce.

In about a fortnight I received my instructions and proceeded to hunt up the Berkshire registers; and a more wearisome task I never undertook. In some cases the registers were well enough kept and were easy of access; in some they had been sold as waste-paper or were altogether imperfect; while in a few instances they were so ill cared for that they had become well-nigh valueless; and one I found in a decayed old box in a loft over the vicar's cow-shed. At Abing-

don, and more especially at St. Nicholas, the registers had been admirably preserved, and it was here that I spent the longest time; but I failed to find the least trace of what I wanted—not a word either of Dalrymple Bruce or of Tryphena Maddams. Once, at Bray, and again at Wallingford, I thought I was upon the track; while at Cookham a whole colony of Maddamses appeared to have been born, married, and buried; but not a Tryphena among them all. At St. Lawrence, Reading, there was a record of the marriage, in 1793, of a certain Theodosia Maddams to Robert Bruce; and this bothered me a good deal till I discovered that Theodosia was the widow of one Kezekiah Maddams, “butcher of this towne.” After a laborious and painstaking search I came to the conclusion that I was on the wrong search, and I returned to London in a gloomy and dejected mood.

But Mr. Bruce was very kind, and not only thanked me heartily for the trouble I had been at, but marked the genuineness of his satisfaction by presenting me with a check considerably larger than I was entitled to or expected. Mary, who had taken the deepest interest in the investigation, told me one evening, when I was dining at their house, that she felt certain—she could not tell why—that I should yet, somehow—she could not tell how—unravel this Gordian knot; nay, that it was to be the means whereby we should attain the fulfilment of our hopes. I hoped with all my heart she might be right, but confessed to some scepticism on the point, for which unbelief I received the most delightful scolding from Mary; and “You are not to laugh at me, sir! I will not be laughed at!” (Oh, the way she emphasized that “not!”) “It is very rude of you to laugh at me, and you shall do penance!”

Seeing that Mr Bruce was nodding over his book, I did penance, though perhaps not just in the way that Mary had anticipated. It was a very rash act on my part, but the temptation was irresistible. You have never seen Mary, or you would understand. Mary blushed horribly, and was both scared and indignant, but I pleaded eloquently for absolution, and finally appeased her. At parting she said:

“You will see, Charlie; you will find the thing out, depend upon it. Women know things, you know, that men don’t know. Well, I know, I don’t know how I know, but I do know that you will discover this Dalrymple Bruce’s marriage.

I'm as certain of it as I am that we—well, as of anything. So good-night, and be a good boy and don't contradict. No! not one, I declare!"

The first news that greeted me on my return to my city chambers was that Mrs. Swatman's mummified assistant, Mrs. Crump, was seriously ill. Of course I lost no time in seeing that she had proper attendance and any little comfort that the doctor might think good for her. The doctor gave a poor account of her. Few men in chambers ever know anything of the inner life of their "laundresses," and from what I learned of Mrs. Crump's surroundings I should say their ignorance is bliss.

In a wretched room, in a disreputable-looking building, in a court off Drury Lane, the poor old creature had her home.

In this delectable apartment Mrs. Crump lay, and there my doctor attended her. She wanted for nothing that we could provide her; and one evening at Mr. Bruce's I managed to interest him and Mary in the old woman, insomuch that Mr. Bruce not only permitted Mary to visit her, but himself sent to her at various times a quantity of port out of his own cellar. He had his reward.

On Christmas Day I was dining at his table, and during dinner Mary found an opportunity to tell me that she had a Christmas present for me up-stairs, but she refused, notwithstanding my urgent inquiries, to tell me what it was. I had visions of smoking-caps and slippers and other ornamental and useless rubbish that girls usually think appropriate gifts for men. It turned out to be something much more to my liking. I had, and have, a weakness for old books, and my chambers were almost lined with them. Mrs. Crump, it appeared, desirous of testifying her gratitude for my little attentions, had commissioned Mary to present to me in her own name one of the mouldy volumes I had noticed on the chest of drawers. This bibliomania of mine was shared by Mr. Bruce, who had a magnificent collection; but while he issued semi-royal mandates to Quaritch and Toovey, to Ellis and Pickering, I had to content myself with an occasional prize from a book-stall or at a country auction. Mrs. Crump's Christmas present was an old folio copy of Ambrose Pavi, in fair preservation, except as to the old calf binding, which needed repair. I was turning over the leaves and showing Mary some of the least eccentric of the old woodcuts.

"Ha!" said Mr. Bruce, "a copy of old Pavi, and a nice clean copy, too. Let me look at it, Mary, and let me have some coffee."

He and I turned over the book together, and had some talk about the author. As I was closing it, the fly-leaf fell to the ground and fluttered to Mr. Bruce's feet. He picked it up and was about to hand it to me, when he suddenly exclaimed with some excitement:

"This is extraordinary! Did you not notice this?"

On the fly-leaf was written in a straight, stiff handwriting: "Dalrymple Bruce, his booke, 1790."

We looked at it together in silence for about a minute. Mr. Bruce spoke first.

"Who was your Mrs. Crump? Do you know her maiden name?"

"I know nothing about her, except that she once told me she was in service at Chicksands Priory, in Bedfordshire."

"In what part of Bedfordshire is Chicksands Priory?"

"Really I don't know; my acquaintance with the place is confined to Aspley Guise and Woburn, and it certainly is not in that neighborhood."

"Do you mind my keeping this? I must see Mrs. Crump in the morning, and you had better perhaps come with me. Come to my chambers about eleven and we'll go together."

I willingly agreed to be with him at the hour named, and the next day accordingly we interviewed Mrs. Crump, who by this time was well enough to be up, though not to be about. Poor old woman! She was quite frightened at Mr. Bruce's somewhat professional method of cross-examination. He, however, elicited the information that her maiden name was Medlock; her father had been a laborer in Lord Ongley's employ at Warden, in Bedfordshire. Her mother's maiden name she did not know. Both her father and mother were dead. They had both died while in service at Chicksands Priory, and were both buried at Warden. She was the only child, and on her parents' decease she had sold the few things they possessed except two or three books which she had played with while a child and did not like to part with. There was no family Bible among them. There was an old almanac. There they were on the drawers, and we were quite welcome to look at them, or for that matter to take them away. The almanac was not among the books on the

drawers; it was in her "box." Her box was under the bed, and if we wanted the almanac she would get it for us.

We did want to see that almanac very particularly indeed, but I made Mrs. Crump sit in her chair while I pulled the box out from under the bed and dragged it up in front of her. She opened it, revealing a strange, heterogeneous collection of articles, whence derived and wherefore treasured only Mrs. Crump—and possibly not even she—could have explained. All three of us—even the dignified Mr. Bruce, too—united in ransacking the ancient receptacle. It seemed as if there was no end of things, except the one thing that we wanted. I began to fear that the almanac had gone to the limbo of almanacs, and that we were destined to another and a final disappointment. I took up an aged pair of stays, to look underneath them, and a dingy pamphlet dropped out of them. I caught up the pamphlet and examined it—it was an almanac of the year 1794. With trembling fingers I turned to the date of the marriage. Opposite it, in faded ink, were written the words, "This day I was united to my beloved Tryphena Dalrymple Bruce." I turned to the cover. There was a pocket in it; in the pocket was a folded document. I drew it out and unfolded it, and there was the long-sought marriage certificate that established the Dunedin peerage.

There is not much more to my story. Mrs. Crump—otherwise Lieutenant Louisa—got well and passed the rest of her days in peace and plenty. My aunt, who is still living, made over to me half her property, with a reversionary interest in the remainder of it. I had a private interview with Mr. Bruce and he is now my father-in-law, and Mary and I are as happy as a wife and husband can ever expect to be.

CATCHING A COLONEL

This story tells of a canny Scot that proved too much for an irascible Irishman, and, in an amusing scene at a regimental dinner, describes how the latter fell into the trap that had been laid for him by the crafty Caledonian. From *London Truth*.

The colonel of the Red Hussars was an Irishman, who was as proud of his nationality as it is possible for an Irishman to be, and that is not saying a little by any means. He carried his patriotism so far as to aver that not only were the Irish the finest, the most courageous, the most gifted, of the four nationalities, but that nearly all the really great Englishmen were really Irishmen. He justified this Hibernianism by a mode of reasoning that was highly original, but not wholly convincing. It would have provoked shouts of laughter in the mess if it had proceeded from the lips of a subaltern, but the colonel was an altogether different person to deal with. It would be dangerous to quarrel with him, and he was as peppery as a London fog, or an old maid who has been jilted by the curate. It was considered far more advisable "to give him his head," and let him exhaust himself by the violence of his own efforts.

When he launched out on his favorite topic, therefore, he was listened to in disrespectful silence by his subordinates, but in revenge it was the greatest delight of the wags of the regiment to mimic his voice and manner, and to represent him as uttering the most astounding Hibernian falsehoods, garnished with numerous expressions of a wholly profane character. This was called "doing Old Pat," and was a very popular amusement in every mess-room where the colonel's personality was known. His real name, of course, as the army list will tell you, was Col. Dominick Sydney Power, but this is a trifling detail. He had been nicknamed "Old Pat" at a very early stage of his military career, and "Old Pat" of the Red Hussars was almost as well known throughout the service as Cox's Bank or the cold-meat train to Woking.

Therefore, when the Red Hussars heard that Sir James Macleod had been gazetted from the Blues to their own regiment, conjecture ran very rife among the officers whether Sir John would contrive to hit it off amicably with "Old Pat." It was generally felt that the stranger would probably prove

a Scotchman of the deepest dye, with a very large allotment of Scotch pride and patriotism, while, no doubt, after his experiences in the Blues, he would be inclined to regard a mere colonel in a Hussar regiment with more compassion than reverence. Under these circumstances, there seemed to be every prospect of some lively scenes when the colonel should deem it fitting to take the Scotch baronet into his confidence on the important subject of national distinctions.

"It will be great fun if he goes for Old Pat, and gives it him hot when he begins the usual rot," said young Fanshawe, with a broad grin, and it was generally agreed among the junior officers of the regiment that it would be great fun indeed.

While his subordinates were coming to this insubordinate decision, Col. Dominick Power was engaged in reading a long letter from an old schoolfellow of his, and a former brother-officer of Sir James Macleod's, to whom he had written in order to make some inquiries with regard to the new importation into the mess-room of the Red Hussars, and the baronet's motives for effecting the exchange.

"A woman is at the bottom of it, as usual," wrote Capt. Fletcher, of the Blues. "Macleod was very hard hit, and she threw him over for no reason that any one can divine. Pure deviltry, that is all. He knew that you were ordered abroad, and he wants to get out of the country without appearing to run away. That's the bait. He is a capital fellow; no damned nonsense about him in any way; is a good sportsman; A1 shot; and very popular in the regiment. There is only one point on which I had better caution you. *Don't bet with him.* He is a very devil at bets, and always wins."

"Is he, indeed?" mused Colonel Power; "and he may be the very devil himself for all he'll get out of me. It's meself that would like to see the colonel of the regiment betting with a mere whipper-snapper of a subaltern."

Sir James Macleod proved to be a tall, fair young man, whose long features and high cheek-bones testified very clearly that the place of his birth lay beyond the Tweed. He was not remarkably good-looking, but he carried himself with such an air of distinction that it seemed wonderful, as young Fanshawe said, that any woman could throw over "such a dasher, and a real, live baronet to boot." His manner, however, was that of a man of the world; and it is not remark-

able, under the circumstances, that he got on at once with the young men who were to be his companions for the future.

"We thought you would be no end of a heavy swell," said young Fanshawe, in a day or two, during which friendship had ripened into familiarity, "but you ain't a bit."

Whereat Sir James Macleod laughed good-humoredly.

"What shall you do when Old Pat begins his usual rot," continued Fanshawe, in a confidential tone, "about Ireland being the finest country in the universe, and everybody else being miserable scarecrows and outsiders? Shall you stick up for 'Auld Reekie?' I wish you would. It would make Pat so sick."

"What do you mean?" inquired the other.

Young Fanshawe explained his meaning at some length.

"And you think that he would be furious if any one contradicted him?" inquired Macleod, fixing a very wary gray eye on the other.

"Furious! I think he would have a fit."

Macleod deliberated for a moment with the same wary expression of eye, and then he said quietly:

"I should like to make a bet with you. I will lay you two ponies to a five-pound note that, if you will draw the colonel out on his favorite topic, I will contradict him on every point, we will have a most angry discussion, and at the end the colonel will be as good-humored and pleased as if—well, as if I had put a hundred pounds in his pocket."

"You don't know Old Pat," replied Fanshawe, shaking his head. "He'll make the regiment too hot to hold you in less than no time."

"Well, shall I book the bet?" suggested Macleod, blandly.

"No; I won't bet on a certainty."

"*Are* you sure," inquired Macleod, with an air of doubt, "that it isn't that you don't feel—quite—up—to drawing Old Pat——"

"You may book the bet," cried Fanshawe, haughtily, and his cheek flushed with anger. "And if you lose, you will have no one to thank but yourself."

"Quite so," said Macleod, calmly, and he made the entry in his pocket-book in the most business-like way. "And if I lose—well, at any rate I shall afford you some amusement!"

And so it came about that that same evening, after dinner, when the wine was circulating pretty freely, and a mellow

glow was beginning to make its appearance on the colonel's ripe visage, young Fanshawe, to the consternation of the mess, introduced the subject of a deceased Irish politician.

"What a scoundrel that fellow was!" said young Fanshawe, *à propos* of nothing, and dragging the dead leader into the conversation precisely as Mr. Dick used to hoist King Charles the First's head into the "Memorial."

The other subs looked at young Fanshawe with an expression of amazement. Had he gone out of his senses, or had the wine got into his head? Closer inspection, however, showed that he looked unnaturally sober and unusually intelligent. Then there must be some game on—some game at the colonel's expense. This would probably be good sport, and it would be as well to be in at the death. Every eye was therefore fixed on the colonel. Old Pat was not to be drawn by a young Fanshawe. He snorted indignantly, but reserved his steel for worthier foes.

The circle of watchful eyes now turned to Fanshawe. What would be his next move?

"My *pater* has just bought a hogshead of the finest Scotch whiskey," said the youth, coming up to time with commendable alacrity and a cheerful smile. He launched out into some details on the subject concluding with the following significant remark: "I hate Irish whiskey. It is such sickening, soapy stuff. I think Scotch is much the best."

A joyful gleam shone in the attentive optics. This was getting interesting. Young Fanshawe was actually of *malice prepense* "going for" Old Pat. "Hooray! Yoicks! Tallyho! Go it, young Fanshawe!" were the sentiments reflected in the breasts of that hopeful youth's brother-subalterns; while even the major, who certainly ought to have known better, grinned with intense enjoyment.

"Don't you think so, Macleod?" said young Fanshawe to the Scotchman, who was cracking walnuts with the utmost *insouciance*.

"Don't I think what?" he replied.

"That Scotch whiskey is better than Irish?"

"Why, of course. Can there be any doubt? Does any one dispute it?"

This sally was too much for Old Pat. He plunged at once into the fray, and a heated discussion ensued. At least it was heated on his side, for Macleod retained an appearance

of judicial calm that would have put Job himself in a bad temper. Young Fanshawe, it may be added, at once seized the opportunity to retire from the forefront of the battle, and took up the safe position of an interested spectator.

In a comparatively short time a great deal of unpalatable information was shot upon the colonel. He was told that not only was Scotch whiskey far more pleasing to the taste than Irish, but it was less injurious to the health, and there was less of illicit distillation in Scotland than in Ireland. Warming apparently to his subject, and totally regardless of Old Pat's passionate and profane defence, Macleod went on to enunciate the view that all that was really good and great in the Irish nation was English or Scotch in origin, that the Irish colonies in English towns formed the most criminal and degraded portion of the population, and that there was actually something in the climate or the soil of Ireland which deteriorated the physical and moral character of the inhabitants. He said this with the calm utterance of a lecturer who demonstrates facts. There was even a softer undertone perceptible now and then, as if he pitied the advocate of so miserable a cause.

The colonel became almost incoherent with rage. His face assumed a deep purple hue. He manifested an inclination to foam at the mouth.

"For proof of this," continued Macleod, "it is quite enough to refer to a well-known and incontrovertible fact. Whether it is due to the potatoes that they eat or the bog-water that they drink, I don't know; but it is quite enough for my purpose that every Irishman of anything like ancient descent has a black roof to his mouth. You will bear me out in that, colonel, I am sure."

The mess in vain endeavored to preserve a dignified demeanor. They were nearly choking with suppressed laughter. Young Fanshawe contrived to upset a decanter in order to hide his emotion. Another young scapegrace was obliged to go to the sideboard, where he gurgled subterraneously for several minutes with his back to the company.

"It's a lie!" roared the colonel, whose eyes were nearly starting out of his head. "An infernal lie!"

"How? A lie, colonel? Do you mean to deny what I have stated?"

"I mean," shrieked Old Pat, "that the Powers of Bally-

coran are one of the oldest families in Ireland; that they were on intimate terms with Brian Boru; and that when the blissid St. Patrick came that way, 'twas me own ancestorr that gave him the *Cead mille failthe* to Ballycoran; and if ye can find a single black roof in the mouths of the intirre family, may the divil fly off with the soul of the dirty varmin."

And with these words the colonel struck the table a blow that made the glasses ring.

"This is very interesting, indeed," replied Macleod, gazing at the colonel as if that dignitary were the missing link, or a new form of butterfly. "I had no idea that any one—even an Irishman—would dispute it. Now, I dare say that you have never thought of examining your own mouth?"

The colonel's reply was of a nature that would have been an expensive one, had he made it in the presence of a magistrate who enforced the penalties against swearing.

"Strange, very strange," said Macleod, who was still quite calm. "Now, I think I will lay you two to one in ten-pound notes that I am right."

A wolfish light shone in the colonel's eyes, but he held back with the most praiseworthy self-control. It would be undignified to bet with a mere sub—and on such a subject.

"I will make it five to one in twenty-pound notes," continued Macleod, with an air of great confidence, "that you yourself have a black roof to your mouth."

"I will take that bet," spluttered the colonel, who was now in a white heat of rage. "By me soul, I will take that same, just to teach you not to bet on subjects of which you know nothing. It will be a useful lesson. And now how do you propose to decide this bet?"

Sir James Macleod suggested that ocular inspection would be the quickest and most satisfactory method—ocular inspection by the senior officers of the mess. Their words would probably be sufficient for both parties.

The colonel demurred a little to this proposition. It seemed to him totally subversive of discipline. He was quite sure that the commander-in-chief would not approve of it. No other possible way of settling the question occurred to him, however, and, now that he had got so far, he was determined to win that hundred pounds at all hazards, and give the young Scotch jackanapes his much-needed lesson.

Candles were accordingly sent for at once, and a dead si-

lence ensued. Every man looked at the other as if inquiring what would be the next act in this singular drama. Even young Fanshawe forgot to laugh. The colonel breathed heavily, and his eyes glared at his adversary, who still retained his unmoved demeanor.

At last the lights came. Armed each with a candlestick, the major, the captains, and the senior subaltern in turn examined the gaping orifice which the colonel revealed to their gaze, during which inspection young Fanshawe threw himself headlong on to a sofa and kicked like a person in mortal agony; while two other subalterns expressed their feelings in a bear-fight behind the colonel's unconscious head.

The verdict of the judges was unanimous. They declared that the roof of the colonel's mouth was red, not black.

"Decidedly red," said the senior captain, with a curious chuckle that seemed fraught with a world of meaning. "Not a trace of black."

"Not black?" cried Sir James Macleod in tones of amazement. "Are you sure?"

"Quite sure," replied the major, judicially.

"'Pon honor!" remarked the others in chorus.

"Well, gentlemen, you *have* surprised me," said Macleod, glancing from one to the other as if he could scarcely believe his ears. "Of course I believe you—but—if the colonel will permit—I should like to look just to convince my own eyes."

"Look away, me boy," chuckled the colonel, hoarsely. He was convulsed with delight at his complete triumph. "Ye'll have to pay for your peep."

"Well, then, please open your mouth a little wider, colonel; and will one of you hold the light? Really, colonel, you must excuse me, but I can't see. You must really let me open your mouth a little wider."

With these words he actually laid one sacrilegious hand on the colonel's nose and the other on the colonel's chin, and pressed them gently in opposite directions.

There was not a man, among all the reckless crew that stood around, but held his breath in anticipation of a terrible explosion.

The colonel did not rise and annihilate the audacious Scotchman. He bore this insult like a lamb.

The indignity was, however, of the very shortest duration, for Macleod was satisfied with the briefest glance.

"I have lost," he said quite cheerfully. "And I owe you an apology, colonel. Luckily, I have the notes about me."

He produced his pocketbook, extracted two fifty-pound notes from it, and handed them to the colonel.

The latter took them with the most portentous gravity. He was clearly puzzled and uncertain as to the right course of action. He puckered up his face in the most curious wrinkles. Then he rubbed his nose reflectively.

The humorous side of the question, however, presented itself very forcibly to him, and he broke into a broad grin.

"Well," he said, with a loud roar of laughter, "you are a damned impudent young rascal. But I didn't think that a Scotchman and his money were so easily parted."

And amid sympathetic roars from the entire mess, who thought the whole thing a capital joke all round, the colonel's indignation melted into intense enjoyment of his own success. The only person who was unsettled in his mind was young Fanshawe, who could not understand why Macleod should have risked a hundred pounds in so foolish a way.

"I don't think much of that Scotch chap you sent us," wrote the colonel, a few days later, to his old schoolfellow, Captain Fletcher, of the Blues. "Too much brag; too little bottom. He'll never set the Thames on fire. Only a few nights ago he actually bet me a hundred pounds to twenty that I had a black roof to my mouth—cheeky young devil! Well, I took the bet, just to give him a lesson. You ought to have seen his face when he lost. Really, I couldn't help roaring with laughter to see how confident he had been and how sold he was. You must be a dull lot in the Blues if he always wins from you. Anyhow, I have broken the record."

Captain Fletcher wrote by return of post to his old schoolfellow, Col. Dominick Power:

"Confound you! Didn't I caution you most pointedly not to bet with him? Couldn't you have known that there must be some deviltry on, or a man would not throw away his money in such preposterous fashion? Before he left us, Macleod laid me one hundred pounds to a thousand that he would pull your nose in the presence of the mess before he had been a week in the regiment, and without being court-martialled or even placed under arrest for it, and I have just received a round-robin, signed by your mess, declaring that he has won the bet."

RUTHERFORD THE TWICE-BORN

BY EDWIN LESTER ARNOLD

In this strange story of an attempt to right a wrong at any cost, the heir to a title and vast wealth strives to make restitution for an ancient deed of treachery, but is thwarted in his purpose by a singular discovery. Copyright by 'he Authors' Alliance.

At the twentieth outset of this story—when I have made up my mind many times to tell it, and have as often shrunk back from the paper and pen, unwilling—I still hesitate and doubt, weighing with the wretched sensitiveness of my nature your certain ridicule against the hunger of confession that is within me. Yet I must speak, and I will! Here on the twentieth venturing I feel the crowded incidents of that one marvellous evening of my life rise up strongly before me; the giddy, fantastic thrall of the strangest hour that ever a mortal man lived through possesses me again: my cold pen slips eagerly forward to the betrayal, and this is the narrative of my shame and my penance just as it came unmasked upon me out of the invisible past.

I was the youngest son of an ancient family, boasting an untarnished reputation and one of the best rent rolls in the northern country. When I was very young I gloried in the splendid sweep of territory that spread out in purple vistas round Wanleigh Court, weaving golden fancies of the sweet share I would play in the rule of my mimic kingdom; and when I was a little older I quickly learned, with a sigh, that I had no more part in that fertile realm than the meanest peasant on it. Briefly, I was the younger son of three, and before I was come to manhood I had had a fiery word or two with those above me, taken the younger son's portion, and gone out into the world to eat husks with social swine; and, too poor to ask and too proud to beg, kept that sensitive soul my ancestors had bequeathed me and my frail, fine body together on the scanty wages of two unable hands.

Lord! how I suffered during those years, how nicely I measured each black abyss of humiliation, and probed each raw wound that my sensitive nature took in the rough and tumble of that grim, ugly strife for bare maintenance, and then—even now I cannot write it without a lump of genuine sorrow in my throat—my father died, and Wanleigh passed

to my elder brother in the summer, and before the next spring it had gone again from that brother's dead hands into those of Guy, who came between us, and here, in a trice, Guy's horse had tripped and tumbled at a fence and Guy was gone in turn! and I—ragged John Rutherford—who had feasted for years on poor men's leavings, and kennelled with his peers in leaky attics, was Lord of Lutterworth and Worsborough, of Warkworth and Torsonce, of Thenford House and Sudley Park, with a new world of delights at my feet.

It was as sweet a flying sip from the full cup of pleasure as ever a man tasted, and my starving body and my hungry soul, I remember, burst into new young life with the bare conception of it. And that brief glimpse of delight lasted one day. Before I had scarcely ventured from my lair or shaken off those cruel rags, which weighed like lead on my proud spirit, some rolls were handed to me as eldest now and heir—the most secret archives of our race. Therefrom I learned in a few numb minutes what had been to me before only a vague, whispered hearsay, that we held our splendid holdings by fraud, and that many generations back, but well within the discovery of research and the possibility of restitution should a Rutherford arise so minded, was a foul deed of treachery and usurpation, whereby the lawful line had been ousted from their right and ours substituted. That was all.

For six long black hours I—ragged, hungry John Rutherford—lay white and silent and speechless in my garret; my head on my arm on the table, that dreadful thing crushed in my unfeeling fingers, my corporeal body inert and lifeless, while the good and the bad within me fought desperate and long for the mastery, until the fight was finished and won, and I rose to my feet pale, faint, and grateful. I went out and ordered that search which I felt would condemn me forever to my kennel, and the blank drudgery of living from which my soul revolted.

And now begins the strangest part of the story! The search, begun at my orders, prospered so well that soon the long sequence of the wrong had been followed down until, at last, it seemed there was only a step or two needed to snatch the splendid pageantry of Lutterworth and Worsborough, Warkworth and gay Torsonce, from me for all time. I bore these endless hours of torture in dull resignation, and then, on the very morrow of the final discovery, a fierce yearning

took possession of me to see the old house once more—a fierce hunger that overlapped even the physical hunger in which I lived, an insatiable longing to touch even though it were but the humblest thing that friendly hands had touched, to hide my heavy loneliness even for a moment in the kind mother shadows of my home. And so I went.

It was a wet, rough evening, when I turned off the high-road I had been trudging, and, picking my way in the stillness of the dark along broad avenues and through lonely fir plantations, every turn and bend of which were redolent to me of by-gone memories, presently found myself among the tangled, neglected lawns and effaced flower-beds of Wanleigh Hall itself. And as I stood there in the sullen drip of the trees, while the white moon shone between the chinks of the storm upon the desolate face of that splendid sorrow in front, and the black feet of the clouds trod in gloomy procession across the sodden, unkempt lawns, the measure of the price of my victory, the depth of my loneliness, was forced upon me, and I wrung my hands and hid my face, and prayed to the night-time, prayed to the great, unforgiving, inscrutable powers—prayed as I had never prayed before in shame or in sickness, cursing in my blindness and folly that black debt and him who had bequeathed me to pay it, and wept like the weak fool that I was—wept, but did not waver!

Presently the gust was over, and walking out into the light, I hardened my heart and approached the house, from whose many windows only one small streak of brightness shone into the dark air from where an old servitor and her husband lodged. The hall had been left in charge of these, and it was they who gave me admittance and had prepared in some measure for my coming. I washed and dressed in moody abstraction, and then made my way down to the great banquet-room, where a solitary, stately supper was laid for me in grim parody of my condition.

Then I supped under the wide vaulted roof at the table that had seated a hundred, the pale shine of two tall candles making a bright island of my supper—napkin and plate and tankard in the ocean of the gloom around—touching the white tips of the antlers my kinsmen had brought home from long-forgotten hunts, and gilding with their faint yellow beams buckler and breast-plate of that ranked armor they

had worn in long-forgotten fights. On the one hand—far down the hall—the lonely fire burnt away back in the great cavernous grate-place, singing low, sad songs, it seemed, to itself as the gray smoke twined in wreaths up the wide chimney; and on the other hand the long, uncurtained sequence of the mullioned windows and the wet, raven night outside—the plaintive rustle of the dead, unseen summer things that forever drew their withered strands to and fro against the streaked diamond panes, and the sad sob of the evening wind wandering like a restless spirit on the broken garden terrace—lifting with the invisible hem of its sable skirt the rustling dead leaves and gently trying in turn with wet, soft fingers each casement, catch, and latchet! Not a being moved in that full-haunted house, not a sound broke upon the dead stillness; my head drooped, and I grieved with a stony, emotionless grief like the grief of the stones around me.

Then—all on a sudden—some one was coming, and upon my empty ear fell the sound of fine, small footsteps in the dim corridors at the distant end of the hall; those steps were like the dripping of water in the silence of a cavern, and somehow every awakening fibre in me thrilled instinctively to the measured approach of my invisible visitor. I held my breath, and gripped the carved lions on my chair, and stared; then very gently, inch by inch, and foot by foot, the heavy tapestries, down beyond the bottom of the long table, were parted, and from between them came an immaterial something, a smoothly stepping shadow, that dropped the draperies behind it, and came immediately forward into the radiance of the low-burning fire. And there, in the glow, stood a black velvet-clad Elizabethan gentleman, as like to myself somehow, and yet not quite alike, as one bird is to another of kindred feather! For some minutes that strange figure stood there gazing into the blaze, while I strove to steady my beating heart and wondering fancies, and then it looked up. My whole nature was fascinated by that glance. I felt a secret, unknown association between my essence and that thin essence in front of me which was like the eager attraction of the two parted elements of one common whole in a chemist's crucible. I did not fear or tremble; but a quick, strong, expressionless apprehension of my visitor—of every turn and motion of him, of every touch and play the firelight made on his soft velvet garments, the hilt of his silver rapier,

or the lines of his pale, passionless features—enthralled me. And when he spoke my heart was in my throat.

"John Rutherford!" he said in a low, cadenced way—and I thought even the wind outside and the rain-drops had stopped to listen to him—"I have come to-night to explain, to help you to explain, some things which you find inexplicable. You have been wondering and fuming and fretting; cursing the unknown origin of your sorrow, and even blaming with bitter rashness the stable equity of chance! Your grief in this is my grief, and both might end," he murmured, with a gentle, courtierly inflection suiting him strangely, "if you will but lend yourself to me. Now!" he said, gliding gently up until I felt the thrill of the cold, smooth presence that hung about him, "now!—think—remember! back, son of a hundred fathers—back in to the dim—back up the long path you have come—think! remember, I conjure you!"

He laid a light, thin hand upon my wrist, and at the touch of it every fibre in me began fiercely pulsing, my breath came thick and short, my head grew light and giddy, and all the real about became dissolved into a vague, immaterial shadow. I, me, the hard, material passion-aching me, and the solid life around was wiped out, and down I went, out of my own control, down the plane of the immaterial into a fantastic world—remembering at that tragic touch all, everything, I had done. Step by step, backward into the past, my wondering wide-eyed consciousness receded, watching that immortal ego, which was myself, shrink from manhood down to babiness; then materialize again into another life in another age, and heave and push and struggle, and shout and laugh and cry, and, ever acting as though that life it lived upon the minute were the only one, the while it floundered slowly through ambiguous sloughs toward the pale, deathless glimmer of that distant godly Hope which was its life and being—back reeled my consciousness—back by death-beds and altars and cradles, and cradles and death-beds and altars.

At one minute of that compressed understanding I saw myself loathsome for base design and deed, and then the rhythm of that ceaseless struggle for the better, which my ego waged, mended as the baseness mended; at one minute my staggering, startled consciousness saw itself gray and lean and wrinkled—stretched in courtly obsequies upon a bed of silk and minever—and then, as a soldier hot and young, waving a broken hilt in

the thick red tangles of charging squadrons; at one minute of those lives that flashed in endless sequence before him who lived them, he, sunk in a shameful hopelessness, scarcely lived, and then anon—at a hair's-breadth interval—rose to heroic heights.

I could not stand the stress of that wild vision, and presently the material materialized again, and with a gasp I was myself—the opaque curtain, of corporeal being, clouded my mind, leaving only a vague consciousness behind that I had forgotten something I had lately remembered!

“Back again, sweet kinsman,” cried the shadow, standing right in front of me, “back again, sweet comrade, back into the black sea of the forgotten, for that great pearl of fact you have not found!” and he touched me again upon the wrist.

I struggled; I would not go; I gasped, and in a minute I had gone again, and was spinning down long dim vistas of the by and done with, until I came at last, by episode of love and fear and hate and redeeming sadness, back to where two half-brothers jointly owned our land. This was the kernel of it all. The elder of those two close comrades was learned and gentle, serene in his confidence of the brother whose loyal friendship made half the sweetness of the wide dominion that they shared. Another breathing-space, and I saw mad envy growing in the younger till it ripened into a malice and savagery, pictured against the dark background of my fancy in his every pose and gesture; and lastly, in one minute of shame and sorrow incredible, I saw him decoy the other to a pleasant tryst, and stab him most foully in the back—stab him twice and thrice till he lay bloody and dead in the screen of the woods, and all for the sake of a few more acres; then sneaking home, traitor no less than coward, I saw him, by lies and forgery, brand with infamy the true wife and children of that brother; and as he rose, wicked and flushed and triumphant on their ruin, undivided master of Wanleigh and Worsborough, of Torsonce and Lutterworth, I saw his face—and it was my own.

With a scream and a start I awoke, all the terror and shame and confusion of that dread discovery working in my features. I threw myself out upon the table in an agony of contrition, and locking my clasped hands above my head, shut out for a minute the long, dim length of the hall, half seen in the golden gloom of the candles and the deathless

eyes of that gray inquisitor who stood watching the tempest of emotions that racked my soul. So it was I, was it? I who had done that black foul deed in another life, and sown the miserable seed of which the harvesting also was mine. It was I, gentle John Rutherford, that was the best butcher of them all. In my wild, incoherent grief and astonishment I lay moaning like that for a minute, and forgot the gray shadow by me until, presently, he touched me again, and said, more gently this time: "The wrong was great, and great has had to be the repentance; but the methods of the law which governs your life—and mine, there where you are and here where I am, are as just and as generous as they are unalterable. You have offended and made restitution. Good! This single circle of the hundred thousand which composes your life is completed—now see how nicely the ways of 'chance' (forsooth!) fit to the needs of justice; think again, kinsman."

But I dared not. I staggered back, back from the glamour of that shrouding presence about him, back from those inflexible gray eyes standing out keen and bright like two pale planets in the dusky night of my hall; I wrung my hands in my stress like a woman, and wailed as the fear and the doubt and the wonder played like hot metal in my veins; in a frenzy of terror, with the courage of a rat in a corner, I remember swearing I would not remember again; and, for answer, in a thought he had touched me with that smooth, cold, velvet touch, and I was away—nevertheless, dreaming anew—right back into that age where my earlier self had done the baseness, and thence this time descending through the years, I followed on the heels of the outlawed ones I had wronged.

I saw those dear flitting phantoms stream across the stage of my comprehension, dropping as they went from their gentle condition down into lesser ranks, son succeeding father, and brother to brother, a long line of yeomanry living in forgetfulness on the outskirts of the land that was theirs but for my treachery; marrying and working and dying, writing their names in churches and chapels and Bibles, until so many of them had slipped by that presently all knowledge of the wrong that had been suffered and the right unrestored was gone from among them. But could I overlook it?

Step by step and life by life I saw the right in the cottage come down step by step and life by life with the wrong in the

hall. I saw that right inviolate slip from name to name and hand to hand; twice it was nearly extinguished, and then, when I somehow knew in my sleep I had followed it down almost to the actual present day, all the right and heirship of our wide acres and many halls was concentrated by true descent and existed only in one fair, unwotting, yeoman girl. I saw her bud, in the swift bright sequence of my involuntary recollection, from a tender cottage maid into a comely woman with averted face; I saw one in dress of better kind ride down and woo her by cottage door and hazel copse, and win—and lead her to the altar—and all my straining soul and aching heart and stretching nerves were breaking to look upon their faces, for here were they who had bred him that was to-day true lord of Lutterworth and Worsborough—he to whom I must give place and light and life, the embodied heir of that deathless wrong I had done.

I half dragged the white linen from the table, and the clattering plates and cups, in the bitterness of my expectation; I half rose from my chair with starting, straining eyes, still body-senseless as I was, and waited for those two to turn. And turn they did in a minute; and, with a stagger and a start and a cry from the lowermost depths of my soul, I tottered out of my vision into the material world again, tossed my arms aloft, and laughed and wept, and reeled, and then fell fainting right across the floor, right at the feet of the grave, calm, gently smiling shadow who was watching me. For I had seen them—all in one blinding moment of swift comprehension I had perceived that in myself was the focus of wrong and of right, in me was both the debt and the credit—for those two were my father and mother!

* * * * *

There is nothing more to tell. I was ill after that, and when I was well a bulky letter was handed to me saying those who had undertaken my search had, to their marvel, come to conclusions the same as my own, but, it need hardly be added, by methods much more prosaic. And Wanleigh and Worsborough, and Torsonce and Lutterworth, have a new master—a humble, open-handed master, who goes about thinking he sees better men than himself in every wastrel that he meets, and purpose in the purposeless, justice in injustice, and the clear heart of eternal equity beating inviolate, imperturbable, and perpetual under all the noisy pulses of casual life.

ETCHING: BORN UNLUCKY

BY LIZZIE YORK CASE

A last word on the lottery question.

I 'clar ter gracious! I hain't got no use for yaller niggers.

Dar wuz dat gal come ter lib 'cross de way, allers a hang-in' out'n de winder. Den one day Jake, he wuz miss'n, en dat gal she disaph-ed at de same time stimulentusly.

I wuz lef' wid de chillen to fetch up.

I sent 'em ter school en I washes clo'es.

But I got er cravin' ter yer 'bout Jake, en I went to the fo'tune tellah. Sho! She know I wuz bo'n onlucky. Kaze dem's de kine comes a-pryin' 'roun' ter see what's gwine ter happen. En she tole me 'nuff ter make me come 'gin en spen' mo' money. Den I call myse'f fool nigger, en stop dis yer stuperstishun. When I fotch der clo'es home ter de ladies at de hotel, dey wuz er talkin' 'bout lott'ry tickets, en dey sent me out ter git som' numbahs. Tooby sho' I took er chance myse'f, en ev'ry week I put some change in de lott'ry.

'Twa'nt no use, I wuz bo'n onlucky.

Las' one day I draw'd two dolla's, den I b'leeve de luck done turn 'roun'. I sell de table an' chahs t' scrape up some change, en jine wid some er de church folk en buy er ticket fer de big prize.

Den I couldn't work in de day-time, en no mo' sleep in de night-time, er waitin' fer de drawin' till we git pretty low down pooh. At las' hit come off, en we all's went ter de theatre en sot dar wa'tin' fer de wheel ter go 'roun', thes dead sho' our fo'tune would come out'n hit.

Dar wuz a big wheel on one side de stage, en a little wheel on t'other side. Hit wuz de little wheel dat hel' all de prizes.

En de big gen'l kep' er callin' off de numbahs; at las' de big prize come up.

I look at my numbah, en hit wuz thes like he wuz er read-in' hit off'n my papah, till de las' figger, en dat wa'nt dar.

Den I fell down on de flo'.

Now I thes keeps on wid de washin' en I never buys lott'ry tickets no mo', kase I's bo'n onlucky.

En hit ought ter be ambolish'd; I 'clar 'fo de Lord, hit's a bo'n sin, frowin' money 'way like dat, 'less'n yo' wins.

FATHER TOM AND THE POPE;

OR, A NIGHT AT THE VATICAN

BY REV. FRANCIS MAHONY (*Father Prout*)

As related by Mr. Michael Heffernan, Master of the National School at Tallymactaggart, in the County of Leitrim, to a friend, during his official visit to Dublin, for the purpose of studying political economy, in the spring of 1838.

Famous Story Series

In reproducing this famous story, written in the earlier half of the century, it has been found necessary, in deference to modern taste, to strike out certain objectionable passages—without, however, impairing the sparkling humor of the original version.

When his riv'rence was in Room, ov coorse the pope axed him to take pot-look wid him. More be token, it was on a Friday; but, for all that, there was plenty of mate; for the pope gev himself an absolution from the fast on account ov the great company that was in it—at laste so I'm tould. Howandiver, there's no fast on the dhrink, anyhow—glory be to God!—and so, as they wor sitting, afther dinner, taking their sup together, says the pope, says he, "Thomaus"—for the pope, you know, spakes that away, all as one ov uz—"Thomaus *a lanna*," says he, "I'm tould you welt them English heretics out ov the face."

"You may say that," says his riv'rence to him again. "Be my sowl," says he, "if I put your holiness undher the table, you won't be the first pope I floored."

Well, his holiness laughed like to split; for, you know, Pope was the great Prodesan that Father Tom put down upon purgathory; and ov coorse they knewn all the ins and outs ov the conthravarsy at Room. "Faix, Thomaus," says he, smiling across the table at him mighty agreeable, "it's no lie what they tell me, that yourself is the pleasant man over the dhrup ov good liquor."

"Would you like to thry?" says his riv'rence.

"Sure, and amn't I thrying all I can?" says the pope. "Sorra betther bottle ov wine's betuxt this and Salamancha, nor's there fornenst you on the table; it's raal Lachrymal-chrystal, every spudh ov it."

"It's mortal could," says Father Tom.

"Well, man alive," says the pope, "sure and here's the best ov good claret in the cut decanther."

"Not maning to make little ov the claret, your holiness," says his riv'rence, "I would prefir some hot wather and sugar, wid a glass ov spirits through it, if convanient."

"Hand me over the bottle of brandy," says the pope to his head butler, "and fetch up the materi'ls," says he.

"Ah, then, your holiness," says his riv'rence, mighty eager, "maybe you'd have a dhrop ov the native in your cellar? Sure it's all one throuble," says he, "and, troth, I dunna how it is, but brandy always plays the puck wid my inthrails."

"'Pon my conscience, then," says the pope, "it's very sorry I am, Misther Maguire," says he, "that it isn't in my power to plase you; for I'm sure and certaint that there's not as much whiskey in Room this blessed minit as 'ud blind the eye ov a midge."

"Well, in troth, your holiness," says Father Tom, "I knewn there was no use in axing; only," says he, "I didn't know how else to exqueeze the liberty I tuck," says he, "of bringing a small taste," says he, "of the real stuff," says he, hauling out an imperi'l quart bottle out ov his coat-pocket; "that never seen the face of a gauger," says he, setting it down on the table fornenst the pope: "and if you'll jist thry the full ov a thimble ov it, and it doesn't rise the cockles ov your holiness' heart, why, then, my name," says he, "isn't Tom Maguire!" And wid that he outs wid the cork.

Well, the pope at first was going to get vexed at Father Tom for fetching dhrink that a-way in his pocket, as if there wasn't lashins in the house; so says he: "Misther Maguire," says he, "I'd have you to comprehend the differ betuxt an inwitation to dinner from the succissor ov Saint Pether, and from a common nagur ov a Prodesan squireen that maybe hasn't liquor enough in his cupboard to wet more nor his own heretical whistle. That may be the way wid them that you wisit in Leithrim," says he, "and in Roscommon; and I'd let you know the differ in the prisint case," says he, "only that you're a champion ov the Church and entitled to laniency. So," says he, "as the liquor's come, let it stay. And in throth I'm curis myself," says he, getting mighty soft when he found the delightful smell ov the *putteen*, "in inwistigating the composition ov distilled liquors; it's a branch ov natural philosophy," says he, taking up the bottle and putting it to

his blessed nose. Ah! my dear, the very first snuff he got ov it, he cried out, the dear man, "Blessed Vargin, but it has the divine smell!" and crossed himself and the bottle half a dozen times running.

"Well, sure enough, it's the blessed liquor now," says his riv'rence, "and so there can be no harm anyway in mixing a dandy of punch; and," says he, stirring up the materi'l wid his goolden muddler—for everything at the pope's table, to the very shcrew for drawing the corks, was ov vergin goold—"if I might make bould," says he, "to spake on so deep a subjic afore your holiness, I think it 'ud considherably fhacilitate the inwestigation ov its chemisthry and phwarmaceutics if you'd jist thry the laste sup in life ov it inwardly."

"Well, then, suppose I do make the same expiriment," says the pope, in a much more condescinding way nor you'd have expected—and wid that he mixes a real stiff facer.

"Now, your holiness," says Father Tom, "this bein' the first time you ever dispinsed them chymicals," says he, "I'll jist make bould to lay down one rule ov orthography," says he, "for conwhounding them, *secundum mortem*."

"What's that?" says the pope.

"Put in the sperits first," says his riv'rence, "and then put in the sugar; and remimber, every dhrop ov wather you put in after that spoils the punch."

"Glory be to God!" says the pope, not minding a word Father Tom was saying. "I never knewn what dhrink was afore," says he. "It bates the Lachrymalchrystal out ov the face!" says he—"it's necthar itself, it is, so it is!" says he, wiping his epistolical mouth wid the cuff ov his coat.

"'Pon my secret honor," says his riv'rence, "I'm raally glad to see your holiness set so much to your satiswhaction; especially," says he, "as, for fear ov accidents, I tuck the liberty of fetching the fellow ov that small vesshel," says he, "in my other coat pocket. So devil a fear ov our running dhry till the butt-end of the evening, anyhow," says he.

"Dhraw your stool in to the fire, Mистер Maguire," says the pope, "for faix," says he, "I'm bent on analyzing the metaphwysics ov this phinomenon. Come, man alive, clear off," says he, "you're not dhrinking at all."

"Is it dhrink?" says his riv'rence; "begorra, your holiness," says he, "I'd dhrink wid you till the cows 'ud be coming home in the morning."

So wid that they tackled to, to the second fugee apiece, and fell into larned discourse. But it's time for me now to be off to the lecthir at the boord. Oh, my sorra light upon you, Dochter Whateley, wid your pilitical econimy and your hydherastatics! What the *dioul* use has a poor hedgemaster like me wid sich deep larning as is only fit for the likes ov them two that I left over their second tumbler? Howandiver, wishing I was like them in regard ov the sup ov dhrink, anyhow, I must brake off my narration for the prisint; but when I see you again, I'll tell you how Father Tom made a hare ov the pope that evening, in theology and the cube root.

Well, the lecthir's over, and I'm kilt out and out. My bitther curse upon the man that invinted the same boord! I thought onst I'd fadomed the say ov throuble; and that was when I got through fractions at ould Mat Kavanagh's school, in Firdramore—God be good to poor Mat's sowl, though he did deny the cause the day he suffered! but it's fluxions itself we're set to bottom now, sink or shwim! May I never die if my head isn't as throughother as anything wid their ordinals and cardinals—and, begob, it's all nothing to the econimy lecthir that I have to go to at two o'clock. Howandiver, I mustn't forget that we left his riv'rence and his holiness sitting fornenst one another in the parlor ov the Vatican, jist afther mixing their second tumbler.

When they had got well down into the same, they fell, as I was telling you, into larned discourse. For, you see, the pope was curious to find out whether Father Tom was the great theologian all out that people said, and says he: "Mis-ther Maguire," says he, "what answer do you make to the heretics when they quote them passidges agin thransubstantiation out ov the Fathers?" says he.

"Why," says his riv'rence, "as there should be no sich passidges I make myself mighty aisy about them; but if you want to know how I dispose ov them," says he, "just repate one ov them, and I'll show you how to catapomphericate it in two shakes."

"Why, then," says the pope, "myself disremimbers the partic'lar passidges they allidge out ov them ould felleys," says he, "though sure enough they're more numerous nor edifying—so we'll jist suppose that a heretic was to find sich a saying as this in Austin: 'Every sensible man knows that

transubstantiation is a lie;’ or this out of Tertullian or Plutarch: ‘The bishop ov Room is a common imposther:’ now tell me, could you answer him?”

“As easy as kiss,” says his riv’rence. “In the first, we’re to understand that the exprission ‘every sinsible man’ signifies simply, ‘Every man that judges by his nath’ral sinse;’ and we all know that nobody folleying them seven deludhers could ever find out the mysthery that’s in it, if somebody didn’t come in to his assistance wid an eighth sinse, which is the only sinse to be depended on, being the sinse ov the Church. So that, regarding the first quotation which your holiness has supposed, it makes clane for us, and tee-totally agin the heretics.”

“That’s the explanation sure enough,” says his holiness; “and now what div you say to my being a common imposther?”

“Faix, I think,” says his riv’rence, “wid all submission to the betther judgment ov the learned Father that your holiness has quoted, he’d have been a trifle nearer the truth if he had said that the bishop ov Room is the grand imposther and top-sawyer in that line over us all.”

“What do you mane?” says the pope, getting quite red in the face.

“What would I mane,” says his riv’rence, as composed as a docther ov physic, “but that your holiness is at the head ov all them—troth I’d a’most forgot I wasn’t a bishop myself,” says he (the deludher was going to say, as the head of all *us*)—“that has the gift ov laying on hands. For sure,” says he, “imposther and *imposithir* is all one, so you’re only to understand *manuum*, and the job is done. Awouich!” says he, “if any heretic ’ud go fòr to cast up sich a passidge as that agin me, I’d soon give him a lesson in the p’lite art ov cutting a stick to welt his own back wid.”

“’Pon my apostolical word,” says the pope, “you’ve cleared up them two pints in a most satiswhacthery manner.”

“You see,” says his riv’rence—by this time they wor mixing their third tumbler—“the writings ov them Fathers is to be thrated wid great veneration; and it ’ud be the height ov presumption in any one to sit down to interpret them widout providing himself wid a genteel assortment ov the best figures ov rhetoric, sich as mettonymy, hyperbol, cattychraxis, prolipsis, mettylipsis, superbaton, pollysyndreton, hustheron-

protheron, prosodypeia and the like, in ordher that he may never be at a loss for shuitable sintiments when he comes to their high-flown passidges. For unless we thrate them Fathers liberally to a handsome allowance ov thropes and figures, they'd set up heresy at onst, so they would."

"It's thrue for you," says the pope; "the figures ov spache is the pillars ov the Church."

"Bedad," says his riv'rence, "I dunna what we'd do widout them at all."

"Which one do you prefir?" says the pope; "that is," says he, "which figure of spache do you find most usefulest when you're hard set?"

"Metaphour's very good," says his riv'rence, "and so's mettonymy—and I've known prosodypeia stand to me at a pinch mighty well—but for a constancy, superbaton's the figure for my money. Divil be in me," says he, "but I'd prove black white as fast as a horse 'ud throt wid only a good stock ov superbaton."

"Faix," says the pope, wid a sly look, "you'd need to have it backed, I judge, wid a small taste of assurance."

"Well now, jist for that word," says his riv'rence, "I'll prove it widout aither one or other. Black," says he, "is one thing and white is another thing. You don't conthravene that? But everything is aither one thing or another thing; I defy the apostle Paul to get over that dilemma. Well! If anything be one thing, well and good; but if it be another thing, then it's plain it isn't both things, and so can't be two things—nobody can deny that. But what can't be two things must be one thing—*ergo*, whether it's one thing or another thing it's all one. But black is one thing and white is another thing—*ergo*, black and white is all one. *Quod erat demonsthrandum*."

"Stop a bit," says the pope; "I can't althegither give in to your second minor—no, your second major," says he, and he stopped. "Faix, then," says he, getting confused, "I don't rightly remimber where it was exactly that I thought I seen the flaw in your premises. Howsomdiver," says he, "I don't deny that it's a good conclusion, and one that 'ud be ov materi'l service to the Church if it was dhrawn wid a little more distinctiveness."

"I'll make it as plain as the nose on your holiness' face, by superbaton," says his riv'rence. "My adversary says black

is not another color, that is, white? Now that's jist a parallel passidge wid the one out ov Tartullian that me and Hayes smashed the heretics on in Clarendon Sthreet—"This is my body—that is, the figure ov my body." That's a superbaton, and we showed that it oughtn't to be read that way at all, but this way: 'This figure of my body *is* my body.' Jist so wid my adversary's proposition: it mustn't be undherstood the way it reads, by no manner of manes; but it's to be taken this way: 'Black'—that is, white, is not another color—green, if you like, or orange, by dad, for anything I care, for my case is proved: 'Black,' that is, 'white,' lave out the 'that,' by sinnalayphy, and you have the conclusion, 'Black is white,' or by convarision, 'White is black,' "

"It's as clear as mud," says the pope.

"Begad," says his riv'rence, "I'm in great humor for disputin' to-night. I wisht your holiness was a heretic for two minutes," says he, "till you'd see the flaking I'd give you!"

"Well, then, for the fun o' the thing, suppose me my namesake, if you like," says the pope, laughing, "though, by Jayminy," says he, "he's not one that I take much pride out ov."

"Very good—divil a betther joke ever I had," says his riv'rence. "Come, then, Misther Pope," says he, "hould up that purty face ov yours, and answer me this question: Which 'ud be the biggest lie, if I said I seen a turkey-cock lying on the broad ov his back, and picking the stars out ov the sky, or if I was to say that I seen a gandher in the same intherestin' posture, raycreating himself wid similar asthronomical expiriments? Answer me that, you ould swaddler?" says he.

"How durst you call me a swaddler, sir?" says the pope, forgetting, the dear man, the part that he was acting.

"Don't think for to bully me!" says his riv'rence; "I always daar to spake the truth, and it's well known that you're nothing but a swaddling ould sinner ov a saint," says he, never letting on to persave that his holiness had forgot what they were agreed on.

"By all that's good," says the pope, "I often h'ard ov the imperance ov you Irish afore," says he, "but I never expected to be called a saint in my own house either by Irishman or Hottentot. I'll till you what, Misther Maguire," says he, "if you can't keep a civil tongue in your head, you had betther be walking off wid yourself; for I beg lave to give you to understand that it won't be for the

good ov your health if you call me by sich an out-probrious epithet again," says he.

"Oh, indeed! then things is come to a purty pass," says his riv'rence (the dear funny soul that he ever was!), "when the likes of you compares one of the Maguires ov Tempo wid a wild Ingine! Why, man alive, the Maguires was kings ov Fermanagh three thousand years afore your grandfather, that was the first ov your breed that ever wore shoes and stockings" (I'm bound to say, in justice to the poor Prodesan, that this was all spoken by his riv'rence by way of a figure ov spache), "was sint his majesty's arrand to cultivate the friendship of Prince Lee Boo in Botteney Bay! O Bryan dear," says he, letting on to cry, "if you were alive to hear a *boddagh Sassenagh* like this casting up his counthry to one ov the name ov Maguire!"

"In the name ov God," says the pope, very solemniously, "what *is* the maning ov all this at all, at all?" says he.

"Sure," says his riv'rence, whispering to him across the table, "sure you know we're acting a conthrawarsy, and you tuck the part ov the Prodesan champion. You wouldn't be angry wid me, I'm sure, for sarving out the heretic to the best ov my ability."

"Oh, begad, I had forgot," says the pope, the good-natured ould crethur; "sure enough you were only taking your part, as a good Milesian Catholic ought, agin the heretic Sassenagh. Well," says he, "fire away now, and I'll put up wid as many conthroversial compliments as you plase to pay me."

"Well, then, answer me my question, you sanctimonious ould dandy," says his riv'rence.

"In troth, then," says the pope, "I dunna which 'ud be the biggest lie: to my mind," says he, "the one appears to be about as big a bounce as the other."

"Why, then, you poor simpleton," says his riv'rence, "don't you persave that forbye the advantage the gandher 'ud have in the length ov his neck, it 'ud be next to onpossible for the turkey-cock lying that a-way to see what he was about, by rason ov his djollars and other accouthrements hanging back over his eyes? The one about as big a bounce as the other! O you misfortunate crethur! if you had ever larned your A B C in theology, you'd have known that there's a differ betuxt them two lies so great that, begad, I wouldn't wondher if it 'ud make a balance ov five years in purgathory to the sowl

that 'ud be in it. Ay, and if it wasn't that the Church is too liberal entirely, so she is, it 'ud cost his heirs and succissors betther nor ten pounds to have him out as soon as the other. Get along, man, and take half a year at dogmatical theology; go and read your Dens, you poor dunce, you!"

"Raally," says the pope, "you're making the heretic's shoes too hot to hould me. I wondher how the Prodesans can stand afore you at all."

"Don't think to delude me," says his riv'rence, "don't think to back out ov your challenge now," says he, "but come to the scratch like a man, if you are a man, and answer me my question. What's the rason, now, that Julius Cæsar and the Vargin Mary was born upon the one day?—answer me that, if you wouldn't be hissed off the platform."

Well, my dear, the pope couldn't answer it, and he had to acknowledge himself sacked. Then he axed his riv'rence to tell him the rason himself; and Father Tom communicated it to him in Latin. But as that is a very deep question, I never h'ard what the answer was, except that I'm tould it was so mysterious it made the pope's hair stand on end.

But there's two o'clock, and I'll be late for the lecthir.

God be wid the time when I went to the classical seminary ov Firdramore! when I'd bring my sod o' turf undher my arm, and sit down on my shnug boss o' straw, wid my back to the masther and my shins to the fire, and score my sum in Dives' denominations or the double rule o' three, or play fox and geese wid purty Jane Cruise that sat next me, as plisantly as the day was long, widout any one so much as saying, "Mikey Heffernan, what's that you're about?"—for ever since I was in the one lodge wid poor ould Mat I had my own way in his school as free as ever I had in my mother's shebeen. God be wid them days, I say again, for its althered times wid me, I judge, since I got under Carlisle and Whateley. Sich sthrictness! sich ordher! sich dhrilling, and lecthiring, and tuthoring as they do get on wid! I wisht to gracious the one-half of their rules and rigilations was sunk in the say. And they're getting so shtrict, too, about having fair play for the heretic childher! We've to have no more schools in the chapels, nor masses in the schools. Oh, by this and by that it'll never do at all! The ould plan was twenty times betther; and, for my own part, if it wasn't that

the clargy support them in a manner, and the grant's a thing not easily done widout these hard times, I'd see if I couldn't get a sheltered spot nigh-hand the chapel, and set up agin on the good ould principle: and faix, I think our metropolitane 'ud stand to me, for I know that his motto was ever and always, that "Ignorance is the true mother ov piety."

But I'm running away from my narrative entirely, so I am. "You'll plase to ordher up the housekeeper," says Father Tom to the pope, "wid a pint ov sweet milk in a skillet, and the bulk ov her fist ov butther, along wid a dust ov soft sugar in a saucer, and I'll show you the way of producing a decoc-tion that, I'll be bound, will hunt the thirst out ov every nook and corner in your holiness' blessed carcidge."

The pope ordhered up the ingredients, and they were brought in by the head butler.

"That'll not do at all," says his riv'rence; "the ingredients won't combine in due proportion unless ye do as I bid yez. Send up the housekeeper," says he, "for a faymale hand is ondispinsably necessary to produce the adaptation ov the particles and the concurrence ov the corpuscles, widout which you might boil till morning, and never fetch the curds off ov it."

Well, the pope whispered to his head butler, and by and by up there comes an ould faggot ov a *Cailleán*, that was enough to frighten a horse from his oats.

"Don't thry for to desave me," says his riv'rence, "for it's no use, I tell yez. Send up the housekeeper, I bid yez: I seen her presarving gooseberries in the panthry as I came up: she has eyes as black as a sloe," says he, "and cheeks like the rose in June; and sorra taste of this celestial mixthir shall crass the lips ov man or mortal this blessed night till she stirs the same up wid her own delicate little finger."

"Misther Maguire," says the pope, "it's very unproper ov you to spake that way ov my housekeeper: I won't allow it."

"Honor bright, your holiness," says his riv'rence, laying his hand on his heart.

"Oh, by this and by that, Misther Maguire," says the pope, "I'll have none of your insiniuations: I don't care who sees my whole household," says he; "I don't care if all the faymales undher my roof was paraded down the High Street of Room," says he.

"Oh, it's plain to be seen how little you care who sees

them," says his riv'rence. "You're afeared, now, if I was to see your housekeeper, that I'd say she was too handsome."

"No, I'm not!" says the pope; "I don't care who sees her," says he. "Anthony," says he to the head butler, "bid Eliza throw her apron over her head, and come up here." Wasn't that stout in the blessed man? Well, my dear, up she came, stepping like a three-year-old and blushing like the brake o' day: for though her apron was thrown over her head as she came forrid, till you could barely see the tip ov her chin—more be token there was a lovely dimple in it, as I've been tould—yet she let it shlip a bit to one side, by chance like, jist as she got fornenst the fire, and if she wouldn't have given his riv'rence a shot if he hadn't been a priest, it's no matther.

"Now, my dear," says he, "you must take that skillet, and hould it over the fire till the milk comes to a blood-hate; and the way you'll know that will be by stirring it onst or twice wid the little finger ov your right hand, afore you put in the butther: not that I misdoubt," says he, "but that the same finger's fairer nor the whitest milk that ever came from the tit."

"None of your deludhering talk to the young woman, sir," says the pope, mighty stern. "Stir the posset as he bids you, Eliza, and then be off wid yourself," says he.

"I beg your holiness' pardon ten thousand times," says his riv'rence; "I'm sure I meant nothing onproper; I hope I'm uncapable ov any sich dirilection of my duty," says he. "But, marciful Saver!" he cried out, jumping up on a sudden, "look behind you, your holiness—I'm blest but the room's on fire!"

Sure enough the candle fell down that minit, and was near setting fire to the windy curtains, and there was some bustle, as you may suppose, getting things put to rights. And now I have to tell you ov a raally onpleasant occurrence. If I was a Prodesan that was in it, I'd say that, while the pope's back was turned, Father Tom made free wid the two lips ov Miss Eliza; but, upon my conscience, I believe it was a mere mistake that his holiness fell into on account of his being an ould man, and not having aither his eyesight or his hearing very perfect. At any rate it can't be denied but that he had a shtrong imprission that sich was the case; for he wheeled about as quick as thought—it was jist as his riv'rence was

sitting down—and charged him wid the offince plain and plump. “Is it kissing my housekeeper before my face you are, you villain?” says he. “Go down out o’ this,” says he to Miss Eliza; “and do you be packing off wid you,” he says to Father Tom, “for it’s not safe to have the likes ov you in a house where there’s temptation in your way.”

“Is it me?” says his riv’rence; “why, what would your holiness be at, at all? Sure I wasn’t doing no sich thing.”

“Would you have me doubt the evidence ov my sinses?” says the pope; “would you have me doubt the testimony ov my eyes and ears?” says he.

“Indeed I would so,” says his riv’rence, “if they pretend to have informed your holiness ov any sich foolishness.”

“Why,” says the pope, “I seen you afther kissing Eliza as plain as I see the nose on your face; I heard the smack you gave her as plain as ever I heard thundher.”

“And how do you know whether you see the nose on my face or not?” says his riv’rence; “and how do you know whether what you thought was thundher, was thundher at all? Them operations of the sinses,” says he, “comprises only particular corporayal emotions, connected wid sartain confused percptions called sinsations, and isn’t to be depended upon at all. If we were to follow them blind guides, we might jist as well turn heretics at onst. ’Pon my secret word, your holiness, it’s naither charitable nor orthodox ov you to set up the testimony ov your eyes and ears agin the character ov a clergyman. And now, see how aisy it is to explain all them phwenomena that perplexed you. I ris and went over beside the young woman because the skillet was boiling over, to help her to save the dhrop ov liquor that was in it; and as for the noise you heard, my dear man, it was naither more nor less nor myself dhrawing the cork out ov this blissid bottle.”

“Don’t offer to thrape that upon me!” says the pope; “here’s the cork in the bottle still, as tight as a wedge.”

“I beg your pardon,” says his riv’rence “that’s not the cork at all,” says he; “I dhrew the cork a good two minits ago, and it’s very purly spitted on the end ov this blissid cork-shcrew at this prisint moment; howandiver you can’t see it, because it’s only its raal prisence that’s in it. But that appearance that you call cork,” says he, “is nothing but the outward spacies and external qualities of the cortical na-

thur. Them's nothing but the accidents of the cork that you're looking at and handling; but, as I tould you afore, the real cork's dhrew, and is here prisint on the end ov this nate little insthument, and it was the noise I made in dhrawing it that you mistook for the sound ov the *pogue*."

You know there was no conthravening what he said; and the pope couldn't openly deny it. Howandiver he thried to pick a hole in it this way. "Granting," says he, "that there is the differ you say betwixt the reality ov the cork and them cortical accidents, and that it's quite possible, as you allidge, that the thrue cork is really prisint on the end ov the shcrew, while the accidents keep the mouth ov the bottle stopped—still," says he, "I can't undherstand, though willing to acquit you, how the dhrawing ov the real cork, that's onpalpable and widout accidents, could produce the accident of that sensible explosion I heard jist now."

"All I can say," says his riv'rence, "is that I'm sinsible it was a real accident, anyhow."

"Ay," says the pope, "the kiss you gave Eliza, you mane."

"No," says his riv'rence, "but the report I made."

"I don't doubt you," says the pope.

"No cork could be dhrew with less noise," says his riv'rence.

"It would be hard for anything to be less nor nothing, barring algebra," says the pope.

"I can prove to the conthrary," says his riv'rence. "This glass ov whiskey is less nor that tumbler ov punch, and that tumbler of punch is nothing to this jug ov *scaltheen*."

"Do you judge by superficial misure or by the liquid contents?" says the pope.

"Don't stop me betwixt my premisses and my conclusion," says his riv'rence; "*ergo*, this glass ov whiskey is less nor nothing; and for that raison I see no harm in life in adding it to the contents ov the jug, just by way ov a frostnail."

"Adding what's less nor nothing," says the pope, "is subtraction according to algebra; so here goes to make the rule good," says he, filling his tumbler wid the blessed stuff, and sitting down again at the table, for the anger didn't stay two minits on him, the good-hearted ould sowl.

"Two minuses makes one plus," says his riv'rence, as ready as you plase, "and that'll account for the increased daycrement I mane to take the liberty of producing in the

same mixed quantity," says he, follying his holiness' epistolical example.

"By all that's good," says the pope, "that's the best stuff I ever tasted; you call it a mixed quantity, but I say it's prime."

"Since it's ov the first ordher, then," says his riv'rence, "we'll have the less deffeequilty in reducing it to a simple equation."

"You'll have no fractions at my side, anyhow," says the pope. "Faix, I'm afeared," says he, "it's only too aisy ov solution our sum is like to be."

"Never fear for that," says his riv'rence, "I've a good stock of surds here in the bottle; for I tell you it will take us a long time to exthract the root ov it, at the rate we're going on."

"What makes you call the blessid quart an irrational quantity?" says the pope.

"Because it's too much for one, and too little for two," says his riv'rence.

"Clear it ov its coefficient, and we'll thry," says the pope.

"Hand me over the exponent, then," says his riv'rence.

"What's that?" says the pope.

"The shcrew, to be sure," says his riv'rence.

"What for?" says the pope.

"To dhraw the cork," says his riv'rence.

"Sure the cork's dhrew," says the pope.

"But the sperits can't get out on account of the accidents that's stuck in the neck ov the bottle," says his riv'rence.

"Accident ought to be passable to sperit," says the pope, "and that makes me suspect that the reality ov the cork's in it afther all."

"That's a barony-masia," says his riv'rence, "and I'm not bound to answer it. But the fact is, that it's the accidents ov the sperits too that's in it, and the reality's passed out through the cortical species as you say; for, you may have observed, we've both been in rale good sperits ever since the cork was dhrawn, and where else would the real sperits come from if they wouldn't come out ov the bottle?"

"Well, then," says the pope, "since we've got the reality, there's no use troubling ourselves wid the accidents."

"Oh, begad," says his riv'rence, "the accidents is very essential too; for a man may be in the best ov good sperits, as

far as his immaterial part goes, and yet need the accidental qualities ov good liquor to hunt the sinsible thirst out ov him." So he dhraws the cork in earnest, and sets about brewing the other skillet ov *scaltheen*; but, faix, he had to get up the ingredients this time by the hands ov ould Molly; though devil a taste ov her little finger he'd let widin a yard ov the same decoction.

But, my dear, here's the Freeman's Journal, and we'll see what's the news afore we finish the residuary proceedings ov their two holinesses.

Hurroo, my darlings!—didn't I tell you it 'ud never do? Success to bould John Tuam and the ould siminary ov Firdra-more! Oh, more power to your grace every day you rise, 'tis you that has broken their boord into shivers undher your feet! Sure, and isn't it a proud day for Ireland, this blessid feast ov the chair ov Saint Pether? Isn't Carlisle and Whateley smashed to pieces, and their whole college of swaddling teachers knocked into smidhereens. John Tuam, your sowl, has tuck his pasthoral staff in his hand and beathen them out ov Connaught as fast as ever Pathrick druve the sarpints into Clew Bay. Poor ould Mat Kavanagh, if he was alive this day, 'tis he would be the happy man. "My curse upon their g'ographies and Bibles," he used to say; "where's the use ov perplexing the poor childer wid what we don't undherstand ourselves?" No use at all, in troth, and so I said from the first myself. Well, thank God and his grace, we'll have no more thrigonomethry nor scripther in Connaught. We'll hould our lodges every Saturday night as we used to, wid our chairman behind the masther's desk, and we'll hear our mass every Sunday morning wid the blessed priest shtanding afore the same. Glory be to God! I've done wid their lecthirs—they may all go and be d——d wid their consumption and production. I'm off to Tallymactaggart before daylight in the morning, where I'll thry whether a sod or two o' turf can't consume a cartload ov heresy, and whether a weekly meeting ov the lodge can't produce a new thayory ov rints. But afore I take my lave ov you, I may as well finish my story about Father Tom that I hear is coming up to whale the heretics in Adam and Eve during the Lint.

The pope—and indeed it ill becomes a good Catholic to say anything agin him—no more would I, only that his riv'-

rence was in it—but you see the fact ov it is, that the pope was as envious as ever he could be, at seeing himself sacked right and left by Father Tom, and bate out ov the face, the way he was, on every science and subjec' that was started. So, not to be outdone altogether, he says to his riv'rence, "You're a man that's fond ov the brute crayation, I hear, Misther Maguire?"

"I don't deny it," says his riv'rence, "I've dogs that I'm willing to run agin any man's, ay, or to match them agin any other dogs in the world for genteel edication and polite manners," says he.

"I'll hould you a pound," says the pope, "that I've a quadhruped in my possession that's a wiser baste nor any dog in your kennel."

"Done," says his riv'rence, and they staked the money.

"What can this larned quadhruped ov yours do?" says his riv'rence.

"It's my mule," says the pope, "and, if you were to offer her goolden oats and clover off the meadows ov Paradise, sorra taste ov aither she'd let pass her teeth till the first mass is over every Sunday or holiday in the year."

"Well, and what 'ud you say if I showed you a baste ov mine," says his riv'rence, "that, instead ov fasting till first mass is over only, fasts out the whole four-and-twenty hours ov every Wednesday and Friday in the week as reg'lar as a Christian?"

"Oh, be asy, Misther Maguire," says the pope.

"You don't b'lieve me, don't you?" says his riv'rence; "very well, I'll soon show you whether or no," and he put his knuckles in his mouth, and gev a whistle that made the pope stop his fingers in his ears. The aycho, my dear, was hardly done playing wid the cobwebs in the cornish when the door flies open, and in jumps Spring. The pope happened to be sitting next the door, betuxt him and his riv'rence, and, may I never die, if he didn't clear him, thruple crown and all, at one spang. "God's presence be about us!" says the pope, thinking it was an evil spirit come to fly away wid him for the lie that he had tould in regard ov his mule (for it was nothing more nor a thrick that consisted in grazing the brute's teeth): but, seeing it was only one ov the greatest beauties ov a greyhound that he'd ever laid his epistolical eyes on, he soon recovered ov his fright, and began

to pat him, while Father Tom riz and went to the sideboord, where he cut a slice ov pork, a slice ov beef, a slice ov mut-ton, and a slice of salmon, and put them all on a plate the-gither. "Here, Spring, my man," says he, setting the plate down afore him on the hearthstone, "here's your supper for you this blessed Friday night." Not a word more he said nor what I tell you; and, you may believe it or not, but it's the blessed truth that the dog, afther jist tasting the salmon, and spitting it out agin, lifted his nose out ov the plate, and stood wid his jaws wathering, and his tail wagging, looking up in his riv'rence's face, as much as to say, "Give me your absolution, till I hide them temptations out ov my sight."

"There's a dog that knows his duty," says his riv'rence; "there's a baste that knows how to conduct himself aither in the parlor or the field. You think him a good dog, looking at him here; but I wisht you seen him on the side ov Slieve-an-Eirin! Be my soul, you'd say the hill was running away from undher him. Oh, I wisht you had been wid me," says he, never letting on to see the dog at all, "one day last Lint, that I was coming from mass. Spring was near a quar-ther ov a mile behind me, for the childher was delaying him wid bread and butther at the chapel door; when a lump ov a hare jumped out ov the plantations ov Grouse Lodge and ran acress the road; so I gev the whilloo, and knowing that she'd take the rise ov the hill, I made over the ditch and up through Mullaghcashel as hard as I could pelt, still keeping her in view, but afore I had gone a perch, Spring seen her, and away the two went like the wind, up Drumrewy, and down Clooneen, and over the river, widout his being able onst to turn her. Well, I run on till I come to the Diffagher, and through it I went, for the wather was low and I didn't mind being wet shod, and out on the other side, where I got up on a ditch, and seen sich a coorse as I'll be bound to say was never seen afore or since. If Spring turned that hare onst that day, he turned her fifty times, up and down, back and for'ard, throughout and about. At last he run her right into the big quarry hole in Mullaghbawn, and when I went up to look for her fud, there I found him shtretched on his side, not able to stir a foot, and the hare lying about an inch afore his nose as dead as a door-nail, and divil a mark of a tooth upon her. Eh, Spring, isn't that thrue?" says he. Jist at that minit the clock shtruck twelve, and, before you

could say thrap-sticks, Spring had the plateful of mate consaled. "Now," says his riv'rence, "hand me over my pound, for I've won my bet fairly."

"You'll excuse me," says the pope, pocketing his money, "for we put the clock half an hour back, out ov compliment to your riv'rence," says he, "and it was Sathurday morning afore he came up at all."

"Well, it's no matther," says his riv'rence, putting back his pound-note in his pocket-book, "only," says he, "it's hardly fair to expect a brute baste to be so well skilled in the science ov chronology."

In troth his riv'rence was badly used in the same bet, for he won it clever; and, indeed, I'm afeard the shabby way he was thrated had some effect in putting it into his mind to do what he did. "Will your holiness take a blast ov the pipe?" says he, dhrawing out his dhudeen.

"I never smoke," says the pope, "but I haven't the least objection to the smell of the tobaccay."

"Oh, you had betther take a dhraw," says his riv'rence; "it'll relish the dhrink, that 'ud be too luscious entirely widout something to flavor it."

"I had thoughts," said the pope, wid the laste sign ov a hiccup on him, "ov getting up a broiled bone for the same purpose."

"Well," says his riv'rence, "a broiled bone 'ud do no manner ov harm at this prisint time; but a smoke," says he, "'ud flavor both the divil and the dhrink."

"What sort ov tobaccay is it that's in it?" says the pope.

"Raal nagur-hed," says his riv'rence; "a very mild and salubrious species of the philosophic weed."

"Then, I don't care if I do take a dhraw," says the pope. Then Father Tom held the coal himself till his holiness had the pipe lit; and they sat widout saying anything worth mentioning for about five minits.

At last the pope says to his riv'rence, "I dunna what gev me this plaguy hiccup," says he. "Dhrink about," says he. "Begorra," he says, "I think I'm getting merrier nor's good for me. Sing us a song, your riv'rence," says he.

Father Tom then sung him Monatagrenoge and the Bunch o' Rushes, and he was mighty well pleased wid both, keeping time wid his hands, and joining in in the choruses when his hiccup 'ud let him. At last, my dear, he opens the lower

buttons ov his waistcoat, and the top one of his waistband, and calls to Masther Anthony to lift up one ov the windys. "I dunna what's wrong wid me, at all, at all," says he; "I'm mortal sick."

"I thrust," says his riv'rence, "the pasthrey that you ate at dinner hasn't disagreed wid your holiness' stomach."

"Oh, my! oh!" says the pope, "what's this at all?" gasping for breath, and as pale as a sheet, wid a could sweat bursting out over his forehead, and the palms ov his hands spread out to catch the air. "Oh, my! oh, my!" says he, "fetch me a basin! Don't spake to me. Oh!—oh!—blood alive! Oh, my head, my head, hould my head!—oh!—ubh!—I'm poisoned!—ach!"

"It was them plaguy pasthries," says his riv'rence. "Hould his head hard," says he, "and clap a wet cloth over his timples. If you could only thry another dhraw ov the pipe, your holiness, it 'ud set you to rights in no time."

"Carry me to bed," says the pope, "and never let me see that wild Irish priest ag'in. I'm poisoned by his manes—ubplsch!—ach!—ach! He dined wid Cardinal Wayld yesterday," says he, "and he's bribed him to take me off. Send for a confissor," says he, "for my latther end's approaching. My head's like to split—so it is! Oh, my! oh, my!—ubplsch!—ach!"

Well, his riv'rence never thought it worth his while to make him an answer; but, when he seen how ungratefully he was used, afther all his throuble in making the evening agreeable to the ould man, he called Spring, and put the butt-end ov the second bottle into his pocket, and left the house widout once wishing "Good-night, an' plaisant dhramas to you;" and, in troth, not one of *them* axed him to lave them a lock ov his hair.

That's the story as I heard it tould; but myself doesn't b'lieve over one-half of it. Howandiver, when all's done, it's a shame, so it is, that he's not a bishop this blessed day and hour: for, next to the goiant of St. Jarlath's, he's out and out the cleverest fellow ov the whole jing-bang

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